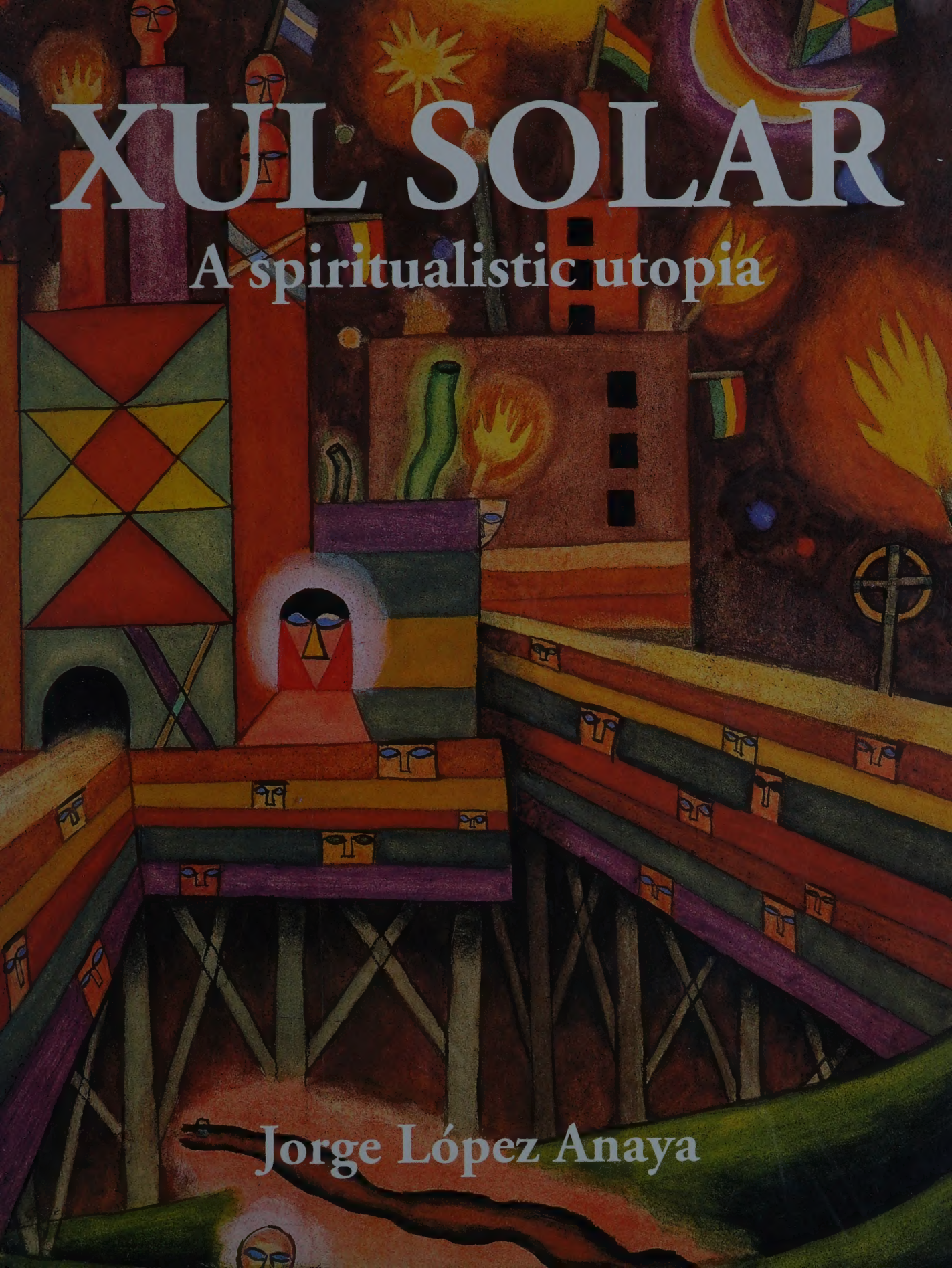

XUL SOLAR
A spiritualistic utopia
Jorge López Anaya

XUL SOLAR
A spiritualistic utopia

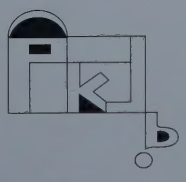
by Jorge López Anaya

Xul Solar is one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of Argentine and Latin American art of the twentieth century. Since 1924, he was among the main actors of artistic modernity in Argentina. In the River Plate, only painters such as Emilio Pettoruti and Joaquín Torres García, and writers such as Macedonio Fernández and Jorge Luis Borges can be considered his peers. Throughout his life he painted almost exclusively (and faithfully) his mystical visions. Perhaps that is why he was not understood. As Borges pointed out: "Xul was the painter of his visions. People accept visionaries from other latitudes and other epochs but, if close at hand, they are denied. The man who saw the atrocious marvels recorded in the Apocalypse receives our veneration; a contemporary visionary is, a priori, absurd. Xul is now a part of yesterday: therefore, we can offer him the same respect that we grant Blake, who also drew strange things revealed to him by the eyes of his spirit."

Cover:

El túnel, 1924.

Xul Solar



PAN KLUB FOUNDATION
XUL SOLAR MUSEUM

XUL SOLAR
Around 1911-1912 (before traveling to Europe)

Jorge López Anaya

XUL SOLAR

A spiritualistic utopia

With texts by
Francisco Jarauta - Juan Manuel Bonet - Jorge Luis Borges.

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The Tunnel, 1924,
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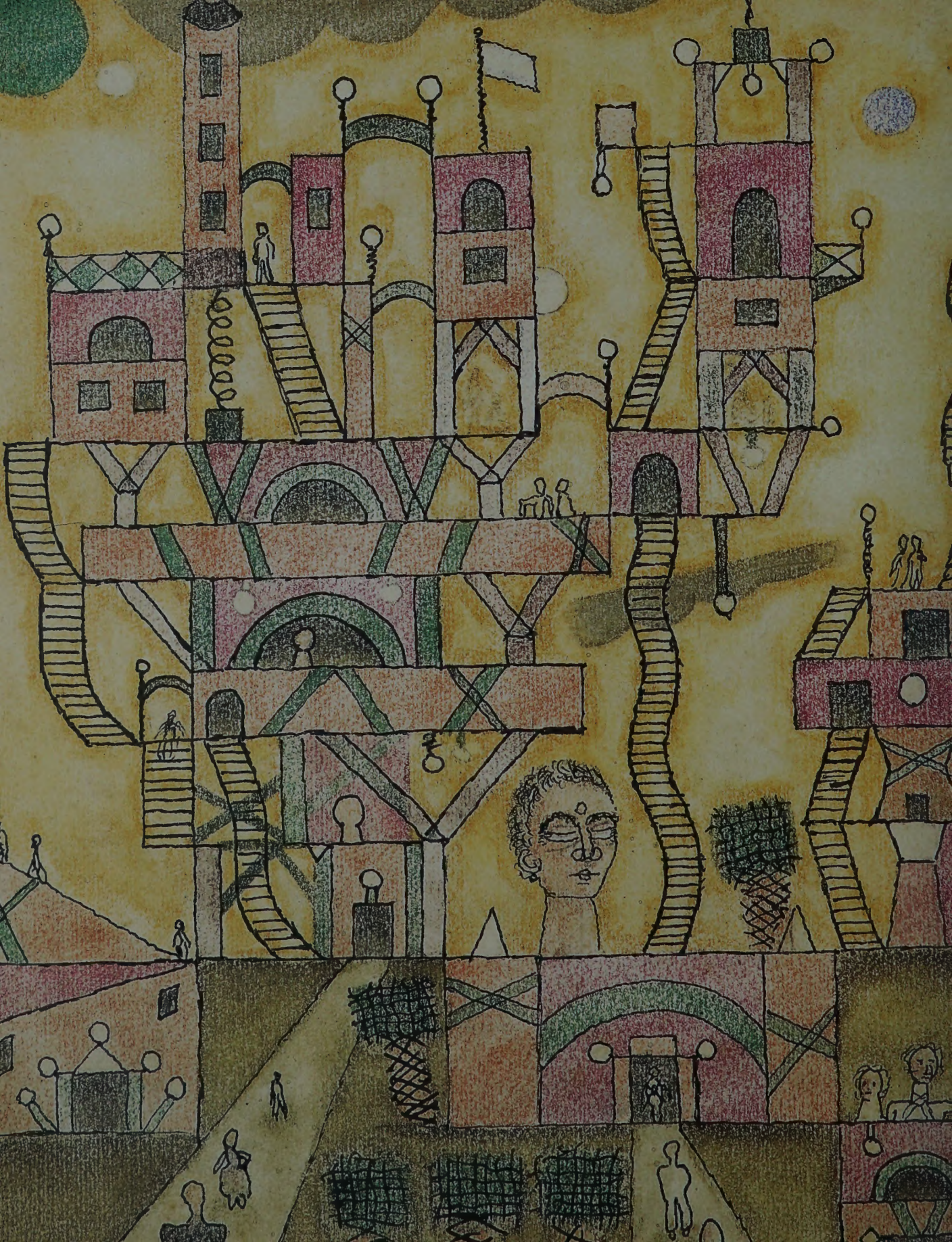

Once again, we have to acknowledge Eduardo Grüneisen's genuine bonds with cultural development, and mainly with the art of our country. There, he can regularly be seen, in different places, backing projects with conviction and enthusiasm.

The publication of this new book on Xul Solar, thought for the international circuit, is a new gesture of his, which I deeply thank in the name of the Pan Klub Foundation.

Natalio Jorge Povarché
President

Twelve stairs (detail), 1925.

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I also have to thank María Kodama for authorizing the publication of Jorge Luis Borges' texts on Xul Solar. I cannot avoid pointing out how indebted I am to my Spanish colleagues, Francisco Jarauta and Juan Manuel Bonet, who generously contributed their essays on the painter to this book.

The first work I dedicated to Xul Solar was the curateship of the Tribute to Xul Solar exhibition, at the Provincial Museum of Fine Arts of La Plata in 1968. On that occasion, I was guided by Micaela Cadenas de Schulz Solari and Jorge Luis Borges. This book owes a lot to the Pan Klub's "kuidra" and to the painter's dear friend, whose conversations were revealing and unforgettable.

Jorge López Anaya

Jorge López Anaya

XUL SOLAR

A spiritualistic utopia

I. PRELUDE

"A man versed in every field, curious about everything arcane, father of writings, of languages, of utopias, of mythologies, a guest in hells and in heavens, author and panajedrecista (pan-chess player), and an astrologer perfect in indulgent irony and in generous friendship. Xul Solar is one of the most singular phenomena of our times."

Jorge Luis Borges

Xul Solar is one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of Argentine and Latin American art of the twentieth century. He occupies a central role in its development. In 1924, when he completed his studies and initiation in Europe, he returned unexpectedly to become a principal actor in introducing modernity into the country's arts. In the River Plate region there are only two artists, Emilio Pettoruti and Joaquín Torres García, and two writers, Macedonio Fernández and Jorge Luis Borges, who can be considered his peers.

When Xul began to paint, at first without any information, he did it with an orientation similar to that of a number of the avant-garde artists of the beginning of the twentieth century: Kandinsky in Germany, Kupka in Czechoslovakia and France, Mondrian in Holland and Malevich in Russia. Like them, Xul considered art in terms of a spiritualism that was apt for creating spiritual models applicable to a new utopian society. He painted without ever adopting abstraction, as so many European artists had done. Throughout all of his life, Xul painted mystical visions almost exclusively and, above all, faithfully. It is because of that, perhaps, that he was not properly understood.

As Jorge Luis Borges pointed out, "Xul was the painter of his visions. People accept visionaries from other latitudes and other epochs but, if they are close at hand, they are denied. The man who saw the atrocious marvels recorded in the Apocalypse receives our veneration. A contemporary visionary is, a priori, absurd. Xul is now a part of yesterday. Therefore, we can offer him the same respect that we grant Blake, who also drew strange things revealed to him by the eyes of his spirit". [1]

Xul created a profuse body of poetry, esoteric in essence, recalcitrant when it came to the rational. He based his artistic solutions principally on color, on transparencies, set in imaginary spaces, with structural rhythms; he also included humor. In all of his creations, as Atalaya observed, a freshness of spirit always blossomed, a noteworthy intention to astonish and amuse himself, as well as astonishing and amusing others. [2]

His artistic approach, an authentic revival of the symbolic forms of esoteric traditions, would not have been possible without the knowledge of anti-materialist philosophers and the principals of occultism and mysticism. The doctrine of spiritual progress and the promise of reincarnation were not foreign to his considerations; they flourished as an antidote to positivism and the materialism of the era. Xul was interested in the cosmogony that had its origins in antiquity; he read Hermes Trimegistus, Robert Fludd, Jakob Böhme and Emanuel Swedenborg.

Ever since his youth, he dedicated countless hours of study to the theories of theosophy and anthroposophy, the cabala, astrology, traditional Chinese thought, alchemy and the histories of religion. [3] Xul would copy poems that he probably discovered in public libraries, by Blake, Rimbaud, Shelley, Mallarmé, Rodenbach, Laforgue, Hölderlin and Quevedo, often in French and English, into small notebooks. His lengthy peregrination through Europe provided the perfect opportunity to witness philosophic and religious meetings, and incorporate the teachings of the masters. It was at this time that he went to lectures on education by Rudolf Steiner and met Aleister Crowley.

Xul worked intensively during all of his life on a combination of investigations, inventions and modifications of old systems. All of these creative activities, inseparable from the complex world of a visionary painter, had an ultimate end: in the manner of an almighty God, he tried to perfect life and the social environment by improving communications between men.

Jorge Luis Borges, his intimate friend, his companion in reading and utopian projects, said that he had never known a man "with such a rich, varied, unpredictable and incessant imagination". On one occasion he defined Xul as a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world or of the universe. But, Borges

1 Jorge Luis Borges, Catalog from the Xul Solar Memorial 1887-1963 exhibition, Buenos Aires, National Museum of Fine Arts, 1963.
2 Atalaya (Alfredo Chiabra Acosta), art critic in the 1920's, co-director of *La Campana de Palo* (The Wooden Bell). His most important writings can be found in *Críticas de arte argentino 1920-1932*, Buenos Aires, M. Gleizer, 1934.
3 Xul Solar's library was often praised by Borges.
4 Jorge Luis Borges, op. cit.
5 Manuel Mujica Láinez, "Xul Solar", en *Los Porteños*, Librería La Ciudad, Buenos Aires, 1979, p. 158.

added, "The ironic gods provided him with this incredulous and timid country, one resigned to all kinds of practices and opinions, because it does not offer them its faith, just a docile indifference. Before silence or a smile, Xul embraced the destiny of proposing a system of universal reforms. He tried to recreate religions, astrology, ethics, society, a numerical system, writing, the mechanics of language, vocabulary, the arts, instruments and games". [4]

According to the recollections of Manuel Mujica Láinez, Xul Solar was a tall and gaunt man who, when in dialogue, "under the protection of his severe smile, would open the tempting door of the mystery". [5] Throughout his life, Xul was faithful to his vision of the world; everything in him brimmed with oneness. His attitude, his way of life, his thoughts and his creations, in the multitude of fields he ventured into, comprise an extremely simple, sincere and humble universe. He lived his life modestly, with a limited income, giving no importance to material goods. He survived by doing translations and giving classes on astrology.

Since 1923-1924, the years that he prepared four texts on Emilio Pettoruti (one was published in *Martín Fierro*), Xul did not write about or make declarations related to the tendencies or movements in contemporary art. [6] It is evident that the topic was foreign to his multiple and complex interests. He always avoided the periodic gatherings of the artistic community and the vogues of the moment. He is credited with having said that he did not want to become a professional artist. At the beginning of the 1950's he once again referred to contemporary art, but only to comment on his astrological classifications of pictorial schools. The text, titled "Explica", served as a presentation for a one-man exhibition.

> *"All of the 'schools' of art that work in good faith are legitimate although partial, like pure colors. A panbeldokie (total esthetic doctrine) would be the rainbow of all the schools. Visual artists, very preoccupied about being original and personal –together with the critics that follow them–as an eraser follows a pencil– have not the time nor the desire to examine the origins of their originality and even less the ego of their person. But philosophizers, bellólogos (dedicated to beauty), have finally resolved that the varied possible 'schools', that succeed and contradict each other, like political parties in the domain of the market, are just formilalias (expressions) of the basic temperaments: the same old four plus three, which are: active, passive and neutral, that is to say, four by three = twelve.*[7]*

Xul, according to his scheme of things, deduced that the temperament of earth (melancholic or nervous) corresponded to realistic art, including photography; water (lymphatic and phlegmatic) to the sentimental; air (sanguine) to the abstract; and fire (bilious and choleric) had an individual stamp or a stamp of a peculiar character.

With this theory, the pictorial schools were classified according to the duodecimal configuration of the zodiac: 1. Gemini (calligraphy, ideography or blocks with letters), 2. Taurus (realistic art), 3. Aries (essential characters, as caricature or Japanese or Chinese art), 4 Pisces (dreams, surrealism, subconscious), 5. Aquarius (pure abstraction, thought-forms), 6. Capricorn (maps, plans, cubism), 7 Sagittarius (whims, intuitions and in part current versions of concrete art), 8. Scorpio (religious, magic, hermetic art), 9. Libra (decorative art), Q (ten). Virgo (photomontage), & (eleven) Leo ("the propagation of any idea or thing that can be affirmed by any means in a visual framework"), 10. (twelve) Cancer (the "illustration", anecdote or story by artistic means). The combinations of "schools" could be multiple and with countless possibilities. [8]

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6 Xul Solar, "Pettoruti", *Martín Fierro. Periódico quincenal de arte y crítica libre*, second period, 1, 10-11, September-October 1924.

7 Xul Solar, "Explica", in the catalog of his exhibition at the Van Riel Gallery, September-October 1953.

* In most Xul Solar's writings, as well as in the titles of his paintings, there is an alteration of the Spanish spelling, according to the rules of the language he created: "neocriollo" (neo-Creole). The author of the present article gives an explanation of its main features under the title Languages. (Tr. Note)

8 Xul Solar uses the duodecimal numeration that he invented.

The work of Xul Solar, neglected or discarded as an oddity for such a long time, has recently been recuperated in a noteworthy way. In the past decade, Xul's contribution has, correctly, been added to the list of precursors of modernity in Latin American art. He joined a group of artists with diverse esthetic and ideological concerns: Mexicans David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivero and José Clemente Orozco, Uruguayans Joaquín Torres García and Rafael Barradas and Argentines Emilio Pettoruti and Antonio Berni.

In 1993 the Xul Solar Museum was inaugurated. His home, studio and library have been conserved, as well as recently constructed special exhibition spaces. More than 80 paintings, documents and "inventions" are on permanent exhibit there. Temporary exhibitions of his work occur almost continuously, now not only in Buenos Aires, but also, for example, in Paris, Indianapolis, New York, Miami, London, Stockholm, Madrid, Malaga, Seville, and Porto Alegre, Brazil. His work has been included in many survey shows dedicated to Latin American art. In 1988, the National Museum of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires dedicated a comprehensive exhibition to his work, sponsored by the Pan Klub Foundation. [9] The same museum, a year later, exhibited Xul's work together with a selection of paintings by Paul Klee, in an exhibit organized by the Pan Klub Foundation and the Paul Klee Foundation of Bern, Switzerland. The Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Center in Madrid presented a major retrospective exhibition of Xul's work in 2002.

9 The show was curated by Jorge Natalio Povarché, president of the Pan Klub Foundation, and by Jorge Glusberg, director of the National Museum of Fine Arts.

II. THE FORMATIVE YEARS
Xul's trip to Europe

A short time after eleven o'clock in the morning of December 14, 1887, a baby boy, who would be baptized Oscar Alejandro Agustín Schulz Solari was born in San Fernando, a suburb of the Argentine capital in the Province of Buenos Aires. He was the first son of Emilio Schulz Riga, a German from Riga, Latvia and Agustina Solari, an Italian from San Pietro di Rovereto, Genoa.

Oscar Alejandro lived his infancy and adolescence in the cultivated environment of the family home and went to French and English schools. According to many references, his capacity to learn languages was prodigious; besides Spanish, he spoke German, his paternal tongue, and Italian, his maternal tongue. In 1906, after finishing his secondary school studies, he entered the School of Engineering at the University of Buenos Aires. Toward the end of his first year, he gave up the idea of becoming an architect and sought employment in the municipal government of Buenos Aires. He did not stay there long, according to his own words, because he never had any work to do.

In 1910, when he was 23, he began to write. The initial symptoms of his vocation and what were to be his most lasting pursuits appeared in those first handwritten pages. In a text with an autobiographical and confidential tone, dated October, and titled "*Bs. As. Noche* (Buenos Aires. Night), he began with a confession, "I am oppressed by a vague asphyxia of desires, like antagonistic clouds that compete fatally; in the midst of my agitation my spirit spins through space seeking the help that would allow me to flee, who knows where". [10]

On another page of the notebook, written toward the end of 1911, he affirmed with a conviction that revealed his enthusiasm for French symbolist poetry:

> *"I comfort myself with my pride and my disdain for my chains, I want, like a pelican, to rend my chest in order to give it to the eternally displaced, to blush with the blood of the perpetually satisfied, as in prayer I elevate the spirit toward my first son. Am I not threatened by an early death? My first paintings, at least 12, and my dramatic and musical poem, will be my obsession at all hours, they will be my legacy so that my life will not be useless and unhappy if I soon fall into the great precipice".* [11]

On April 5, 1912 Oscar Alejandro Schulz, taking his family by surprise, suddenly embarked on the English ship **Highland Carrier**. As he had been unable to put together the money for the trip he had been planning since January, he worked on board as a seaman. He arrived in London 23 days later and soon after reached Turin.

He traveled to Europe the same year that Picasso and Braque achieved synthesis in cubism with the invention of collage, one of the most singular developments in the twentieth century. It was a period of polemics and manifestos; rival avant-garde groups boisterously announced their postulates (futurism in Italy, synchronism and orphism in Paris: cubistic-futurism, rayonism and suprematism in Russia: vorticism in England and other sub-movements, equally frenzied and original, in other places).

When Xul arrived in Turin, one of his first acts was to go to a bookshop and purchase a copy of the *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) Annals, published in Munich a few months earlier. He commented in a letter to his family that the book was "about the advanced art of the *fauves* (beasts), futurists, and cubists. Their work frightens the bourgeois, pictures without nature, just lines and color..."

10 FPK Archives, handwritten notebook. 1910-1912.
11 Idem.

This book, edited by Kandinsky and Franz Marc, is one of the most important programmatic publications on art in the early decades of the twentieth century. Few documents reflect the depth of the commotion of the years before World War I so profoundly. Kandinsky, in his texts in the Annals (and in a small book titled *On the Spiritual in Art*, written in 1908), developed a theory connected to spiritualistic ideas common in Europe in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Upon this basis, that owed a significant debt to the theosophical and anthroposophical writings of Helena P. Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner, he conceived the idea of an art linked to a utopian spiritual expression. It is not strange that Xul had found a frame of reference in the Annals that would confirm the direction of his work, still in its incipient stage, but committed to an antimaterialism of utopian character.

The first paintings

In March 1913, Oscar Alejandro Schulz was in Paris: from there he went to England to receive his mother and his Aunt Clorinda (Solari). After a few days in London and following a brief stay in Paris, he settled down with his family in Zoagli, a town near San Pietro di Rovereto in Genoa. While Xul and his "mamas" lived in Zoagli, his father remained in Buenos Aires, at his post of engineer in the National Penitentiary, supporting all of the family.

Oscar Alejandro returned to Paris, where he stayed for a long period of time. He began to meet other young Argentine artists, like painter Alfredo Guttero and sculptor Luis Falcini, who were working at traditional studios, without any special interest in getting involved with "new art".

The first news of the initiation of Oscar Alejandro Schulz in painting is the brief mention of "12 paintings" in the 1911 text. The earliest works that are preserved are small landscapes painted in oil on cardboard, most done in 1914. These pieces reflect his early enthusiasm for Kandinsky's landscapes of Murnau, which were done before his abstract paintings. Xul's broad brushstroke, applied freely in oblique directions, the simple and anti-naturalist forms, confirm this hypothesis. But that influence did not last for long. He soon began to work on a group of watercolors with symbolic themes and a figurative style that was reminiscent of the symbolist imagery of the Dutch artist Jan Toorop.

One of the most notable of these works is *Entierro* (Burial, 1914)), a watercolor on paper filled with symbolic references, showing his growing interest in esoteric knowledge. The scene represents a mystical funeral procession that advances along a narrow path at the edge of a precipice, escorting the cadaver wrapped in its shroud. A wingless angel, crowned with a fiery triangular aura, (all of the monks have similar attributes) precedes the deceased. The soul of the deceased, whose corpse is carried by two bearers, separates from the body and takes on a fetal morphology. Tongues of fire rise from the depths toward the heavens. The symbolism refers to reincarnation, a fundamental concept in Xul's spiritualistic belief system.

A year later, Xul painted Dos Anjos (Two Angels.* The word "angel" comes from the Greek, *aggelos*, messenger), a small watercolor that shows a pair of angels with plumed wings, in flight, carrying a long paper in their hands, probably a document or a list, and a censer. The iconography seems to be loosely related to the representation of the angels of the Apocalypse (the angel with the incense is present in certain representations of the Seventh Seal).

Another similar watercolor, with four angels, dated 1915 and signed Shol Solari (a primitive form of his pseudonym), seems to be derived from the iconography of the four angels that stop the winds

* Here we have another case of spelling alteration. The Spanish word correctly spelled would be "ángeles". In fact, in this case Xul is using the Portuguese word. (Tr. Note).

(*Apocalypse VII*). The censer, the lists, the triangular auras and the hands of the angels wrapped in tongues of fire are repeated.

In 1917 Xul painted *San Francisco* (St. Francis), a representation of the Saint from Assisi, receiving the stigmata after having spent the night in prayer. Tongues of fire encircle the saint, who is on a hillside with seven trees. A coiled snake is poised in one of the trees. The symbolism is evident. This watercolor, done in a curious geometric style, predominated by circling curves, seems to mark the close of a period. It is signed Xul. The signature Xul Solar begins to appear as of 1916. [12]

A meeting with Pettoruti

In 1916, Xul moved to Florence. It was thenand there that he met Emilio Pettoruti, a young Argentine painter who had arrived in Italy three years before, with a grant from the province of Buenos Aires. Pettoruti befriended the futurists on his arrival, and in 1914 had participated in the Prima Esposizione Invernale Toscana (First Winter Exhibition in Tuscany) with several paintings and two abstract drawings, titled *Armonia-Movimiento Spazio* (Harmony-Movement Space). [13] Shortly after he met Xul Solar, Pettoruti held the first individual exhibit of his career at the Gonelli Gallery in Florence. A portrait of Xul, titled *Luce-Elevazione* (Light-Elevation) was included in the selection of paintings exhibited.

Xul remained several months in Florence, and after a stay in Zoagli, moved to Milan in September 1917. He had been invited there by Pettoruti, who lived in a humble room, "two hundred steps from the Duomo". He shared these quarters until August 1918, when he returned to Zoagli.[14] Together with Pettoruti, he had the opportunity to meet a number of Italian painters in those months, among them Aldo Carpi, Arturo Tosi, Mario Sironi, Adolfo Wildt, Achile Funi, Pietro Marusig and Arturo Martini. Marusig, who later became one of the seven artists of the Novecento, painted a portrait of Xul, dated 1920, which is now at the Xul Solar Museum.

Since 1919, Xul's work demonstrated a fervor related to spiritualized expressionism. It was evident that the young painter, at 32, possessed great knowledge about that movement, which he had come into contact with, initially, in the pages of *Der Blaue Reiter* Annals. He was also familiar with the work of several German expressionist poets, including Johannes Beecher and Christian Morgenstern. In 1912, after he acquired the Annals, he wrote, ingenuously perhaps, that he coincided with the esthetics of expressionism, without having known of the movement previously:

> *"I am very much satisfied because I realize that, on the one hand, without any inspiration from outside, I have been working, on the tendency that will be dominant in the most elevated art of the future. On the other, I can now see how easily I will manage to stand out among these new artists because I have a better sense of composition and color than the majority of them.* [15]

Xul's figurative style became flatter and more schematic in 1919. Cara (Face), painted during that year, is almost abstract, with planes of saturated color. Some works acquired a marked iconic simplification. *Troncos* (Tree Trunks), painted in 1919, now in the collection of the Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires, and *Pupo* (1918), at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, are among the most abstract works with the fewest symbolic elements. *Pupo* represents a primitive mask that seems to be derived from the influence of *Die Brücke's* expressionism.

In some pictures, legends appear written in neo-Creole. In one of them, alongside three figures and

12 The pseudonym Xul Solar is derived from his maternal and paternal surnames: "Xul" is a version of Schulz and "Solar" of Solari.
13 These drawings were considered to be the first abstrac worcks by a Latin American artist.
14 Cfr. Emilio Pettoruti, *Un pintor ante el espejo*, Buenos Aires, Solar/Hachette, 1968.
15 FPK Archives. Xul Solar, letter written in Italian, possibly sent to a relative, received in Buenos Aires on November 8, 1912.

three birds, painted flatly in inks, is the phrase: "Let us also try wings" (1919). In another, the words do not form a phrase: "witch", "soul", "curse" and "crow"; a five-pointed star has the number "18" in its interior. In a scene of the Crucifixion, with three crosses, the following expressions appear: "The End of God", "Good Thief", "Bad Thief" * (1922).

Exhibition in Milan

Toward the end of 1919, Xul traveled to London, where he stayed for several months. He revealed his feelings during that difficult period to his father in a postcard:

> *"My dear father: I expected to return to the fatherland from London this year. Instead, I am here and I will stay here two or three months more. [I am] tired of the excessive savagery and the backwardness that exist in Europe. I write little because I am always thinking of telling it all to you in person. As I have met many Russians, what happened in that country does not surprise me, nor does the news that awaited me, the sad end of our family there. It is impossible to communicate. From now on, I'll write you often. I admire England. Who knows if I'll be able to return; only with an especial license of the Ministry of Work from there could I travel. I embrace you. Alec."* [16]

In May 1920, Xul returned to Milan. Through Pettoruti, he had met the director of Milan's Galleria Arte, who invited him to present his first individual show. The exhibition was inaugurated on November 27 and titled Settima Esposizione: mostra Personale dello Scultore Arturo Martini e del Pittore Alessandro Xul Solari (Seventh Exhibition: Individual Shows by Sculptor Arturo Martini and Painter Alessandro Xul Solari). His companion, a well-known Italian artist, formed part of the group of *Valori Plastici* and later of *Novecento*.

The group of works that Xul exhibited was composed of 20 oils, 46 watercolors and 4 gouaches (*Cattedrale*/Cathedral, *Facciata di Teatro*/Theater Facade, *Scenari*/Scenes, *Androdrendo*, *Marcia funebre*/Funeral March, *San Francesco*/St. Francis among others). Pettoruti wrote the prologue for the catalog. A review, signed M.G.S., commented: "Molto interesanti, il disegni acquarellati di Alessandro Xul, e il suioi piccoli cuadri, ritratti, paesaggi, esprimono tutti nel colore e nel la linea una fantasia ricca più che matura, una costante e assai raffinata preoccupazione decorative, e molto buon gusto, che raccoglie anche talune incertezze e talune esebeanze di ricerca entro una garbata composizione di ensieme". [17] Another review on the exhibition appeared in Milan's *La Sera*. The Buenos Aires evening newspaper, *La Razón*, published a note on January 17, 1921 by a journalist who had visited the show. The headline over his article left no doubt as to his impressions: "Decadence in Today's Art".

Xul began to paint his first mystical architectures with imaginary morphologies in Milan and Zoagli in 1918. The two watercolors titled *Proyecto* (Project) were the beginning of a series called *Bau* (Architecture) or *Estilos* (Styles) which he worked on until 1921. One of these buildings was crowned with a cosmic cupola, a theme in vogue at that time. Others contained a variety of references: *Estilos 3* (Styles 3), done in 1918, was composed of a structure of superposed arches and columns, reminiscent of the Milan's Duomo. Other pieces had a morphology that was derived from the romantic castles of Ludwig II of Bavaria or Gaudi's Sacred Family. The series also included designs for furniture and decorated ceramic objects, some with designs that seem like drawings of spires, decorative structures and symbolic elements.

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* As in former cases, the spelling is altered. (Tr. Note)

16 FPK Archives, correspondence.

17 M.G.S. "Martini, Xul, Galli e Villani", in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, Milán, November 27, 1920.

The coincidence of Xul Solar with the spiritual and artistic world of the German expressionism of the artists of the *Sturm* is evident. It is also clear in the case of the utopian architecture of the circle of Bruno Taut and the *Gläserne Kette* (The Crystalline Chain). But there is no evidence to show that he knew of Taub's work before he went to Munich in 1921. He probably had never heard, either, of George Steiner's First Goetheanum in Domuch, the sanctuary of anthroposophy. Even so, his visionary architectures participated freely of this environment: the fusion between art and men through architecture and the consideration of art as a visionary calling, empowered to create spiritual models for a new society.

The years in Munich

Xul traveled to Munich in 1921 and remained there for two years. On October 20, he wrote: "I am here, but not installed, there is not a room to be found, perhaps I will end up in a pension even if it is in a home, it would be better than a hotel. I have started to go to the academy". [18] He referred to the Kunst-und Lehrwerkstatten (Workshops for Art and Teaching) at which Klee had at one time taught. He remained there for a short period of time.

Pettoruti was soon to arrive in Munich also, where he dedicated his time to visiting museums and exhibitions. He recorded that he saw an exhibition of Klee in a bookshop and manifested the distaste that he felt for the expressionists, with their "eroticism that bordered on corruption",

Xul did a series of simple paintings, with broad planes and saturated colors set in geometric structures, in Munich at that time. Some of these works have guaranteed Xul his singular place in the history of Argentine art, in addition to allowing him to develop a poetic vision that no other artist had envisioned before him. He had undergone a rapid transition.

Among the works that mark the beginning of this new stage are compositions that represent faces and masks surrounded by abstract forms. In *Tres y sierpes* (Three & Serpents, c. 1921), a small watercolor, Xul employs –as he would do on many occasions– the letter "X", the initial for his name, which he magnified and repeated several times. The letter, used this way, can be interpreted as a symbol for the Inversion, which is the movement that permits all opposites to fuse and then be inverted. Hate is transformed in love, destruction in construction, evil in good. Deaths permit births.

At that time, Xul was painting works with a noteworthy artistic richness, with backgrounds of geometric structures, and subtle mixes of saturated and transparent colors. He had been working with a flat representation, derived from cubism, but in Munich he painted the first watercolors to contain a great formal complexity, with backgrounds composed of frontal rectangular planes.

It is evident that this was the period when he became aware of the painting of Paul Klee, an artist who enjoyed a solid reputation in the art worlds of Munich, Berlin, and the German-speaking portion of Switzerland. There are still several books in Xul's library acquired in Munich at that time: *Paul Klee. Leben/Werk/Geist*, by Leopold Zahn (Munich, 1920) and *Geschichte von Maler Klee und von de Kunst dieses Zeitalters*, by William Hausenstein (Munich, 1921). Xul had also kept an issue of *Der Sturm* magazine dedicated to Klee.[19] It is possible that Hans Reichel, a life-long friend of Klee, played an important role in leading Xul to Klee's work. [20] We can suppose this because of the friendship that developed between Xul, Reichel and his wife Olga.

Xul must have been pleasantly surprised on finding certain parallels in Klee's work with his own. In the first place, there was a shared interest in primitive art and archaic figuration. The Swiss artist, like himself, had developed an interest in the artistic expressions of other cultures, ones that were more

18 FPK Archives. Correspondence.

19 FPK Archives. There is a list of 227 books that was presented to the German customs authorities several months before Xul's return to Buenos Aires in October, 1923.

20 Hans Reichel (Wurtzburg, 1892-Paris, 1958), was a German painter who belonged to the circle of the artists of Stum. His watercolors, done in small formats, hold a great affinity with Klee's paintngs, although they also contain elements derived form the work of Kandinsky.

elemental and free from the conventions of cultured western painting. They also coincided in a number of painterly solutions derived from the way they treated the structural properties of color, which they found in the painting of Roger Delaunay.

The progress that Xul was making in Munich was evident He himself commented on it in letters to his father. In one, dated July 24, 1922 and sent from Kelheim, Xul wrote, "I have been making some progress with my painting. I stood in front of two small works today for an entire hour because I was tired and hungry. From that a lot of good will be born." In May 1923 he wrote, "I am making progress in painting. Emilio is pleased." A month later he continued, "I did some very pretty little pictures that perplex the intelligent. Others don't understand them at all". [21]

Xul used subtle registers of bright colors and refined transparencies in the watercolors of that period, giving each picture a notable plasticity. One of the best examples is *Cintas* (Ribbons), done in 1924, where the sensation of the advances and retreats of the color and the transparencies is unified with the poetry of the image. In *Mensaje* (Message), done in 1923, he used a technique that he would repeat in coming works: extending the picture onto the cardboard on which it was mounted.

Americanisms

Xul painted several watercolors with pre-Hispanic Americanist themes, such as *América*, *Tláloc Divo lluvi* (the Aztec rain god) and *Nana Watzin*. His interest in this iconography was probably born during his hours at the British Museum in London, which he had visited with his "mamas". There is a guidebook to the London museum, published in 1912, and a 1922 copy of Mexiko I, by T. W. Danzel, dedicated to the codices, in the library of the Xul Solar Museum.

One of the most important works in this series is Tláloc (1923), a watercolor whose iconography originated in the image of this god, that has been venerated since time immemorial, as represented in the Magliabechi Codex. Tlaloc is a beneficent deity that can make divine and fecund water spout from the earth. He also had his negative side and could send bolts of lightning, frosts and floods to destroy crops. The god is spewing water from his mouth in the watercolor. Lightning bolts in the form of arrows descend from the sky and rivulets of water sprout from the earth. Xul also wrote the name of the god and the word "agua" (water).

Nana Watzin (1923) is dedicated to the myth of the birth of the *Quinto Sol* (Fifth Sun) in Teotihuacan. In a night of yore, the gods had gathered to create the Sun and the Moon. Among those present, there were two candidates, Tecuciztécatl, who was rich, and Nanahuatzin, who was poor and bubonic. Following several ritual offerings and a period of fast, the candidates were invited to throw themselves into the sacred fire. The gods ordered Tecuciztécatl to submit himself to the ritual. He obeyed immediately but retreated on feeling the heat of the flames. He tried several more times but without success. Then Nanahuatzin was ordered to enter the fire. He leapt in without hesitating and was transformed into the sun. He arrived from the east looking splendid, painted red and giving off heat. Tecuciztécatl, driven by repentance, jumped into the fire, but it was too late. The flames had abated, and he was reborn white, the color of ashes. The gods turned him into the Moon. Nanahuatzin appears in the center of Xul's watercolor. He appears to be devoured by the flames, represented as arrows being shot from heaven. The phrase "Altar to the mama-earth Tlazolteotl" explains the meaning of the sacrifice. Xul added another phrase: "Renovation of the saintly fire" * (fire, according to the alchemist tradition of followers of Heraclitus, was an agent of transformation; everything is born and dies in its flames). A figure placed at the left of the fire, apparently praying, is

21 FPK Archives.Correspondence.

* As in former cases, the spelling is altered. (Tr. Note)

surrounded with the phrase, also in neo-Creole: *Ora i adora da-se* (Pray & venerate - give yourself). The entire design is geometrical, and the abstract planes that advance and contract, are superimposed and transparent. The phrases, written in neo-Creole, are distributed across the surface of the picture and are related to the Nahuatl legend.

Another work that offers a complex interpretation, which may also form part of the group of works with pre-Columbian iconography, is *Homme das serpents* (Man of the Serpents – 1923). The watercolor, painted with geometric planes and transparencies, shows a large figure, flanked by three snakes with threatening tongues. An arrow on the right side of the work points toward heaven. The sun appears on the left. A curved form emerges from the mouth of the figure, simulating speech. The body is transparent like an X-ray, showing certain internal parts of the torso. Above the head of the figure, the number "1" appears three times (the same as the quantity of snakes in the picture). References to certain representations form pre-Hispanic codices are evident in *Homme das serpents.* The word Doma (taming), above the arrow, adds another hermetic meaning: could it be the taming of the snakes, creatures connected with the symbolism of energy? The picture seems to correspond to the series dedicated to Power, an important theme in works such as *Jefe de sierpes* (Chief of Serpents), *Jefe de dragones* (Chief of Dragons), *Drago San Jorge* * (Dragon Saint George), *Jefa honra* (She-Chief Honor) and *Hipnotismo* (Hypnotism). There are many written words, hermetic symbols, numbers, arrows and serpents in these works.

Transparencies give the paintings from this period a special plasticity, beyond any symbolic themes or intentions. An outstanding example of this is *Ña diáfana* (Diaphanous Lady - 1923), in the Xul Solar Museum.

Mystical Visions

After spending two months in Zoagli, Xul returned to Munich in January 1923. He traveled to Stuttgart in March to take part in an Artist-Pedagogue Symposium, at which Rudolf Steiner was speaking. [22] Xul moved to Paris in early April 1924 and on April 14 met Aleister Crowley (The Beast, 666) for the first time. Crowley was a controversial character, who cultivated the science of magic and was in contact with numerous personalities of the artistic and literary worlds, from Rodin and Rilke to Fernando Pessoa. [23]

Xul had seen Crowley a decade earlier, without coming into direct contact with him. At that time Xul had not formed a favorable impression of the man. The new meeting, however, with visits that lasted several weeks, was fundamental and could be considered the equivalent of an Initiation. On that occasion, Xul wrote down the method he deduced from the advice he had received.

> *"To rewrite the I Ching describing each hexagram by means of pure vision. To make 64 symbolic drawings of short prose or poetical descriptions but with the most careful attention to a uniform method of presentation, to let nothing stop me. It might be a help to invoke the 2 forces in each hexagram as a start for the vision. In case vision fails with any hexgr., go on to the next at next date ( ) overcome obstacles after completing the series".* [24]

Xul began to record his visions in a notebook, without forgetting Crowley's indications. He wrote and rewrote, year after year, 64 texts corresponding to the hexagrams of the *Libro de las Mutaciones* (Book of Changes) in poetic prose. He gradually converted the texts into neo-Creole as the language itself progressed. At one point he considered publishing the work under the title *San Signos* (Saint Signs).

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* As in former cases, the spelling is altered. (Tr. Note)

22 Rudolf Steiner gave nine talks in Stuttgart, between March 25 and 30, 1923.

23 Aleister Crowley (Leamington, Warwickshire, 1875-Hastings, 1947), was the author of *Liber Alvel Legis* or *The Book of the Law*, a compendium of practical magical formulas, veiled in cabalistic and Egyptian symbolism. There are documents relating to the brief relationship between Xul and Crowley in the FPK Archives.

24 FPK Archives. Manuscript in English.

The origin of many of the themes of his future work can be found in the 64 visions. Many of the fundamental concepts in Xul's iconography appear in the vision that corresponds to the first hexagram. "The construction of the spiritual temple", the *san libros* (saint books), the *sanglifos* (saint glyphs), the *san versos* (saint verses), the divine revelations, horoscopes and astral messages can be traced to the text.

> *"I sit upright with my arms crossed and pray to my god. The mountain is made of refuse and ruin and de-tritus and memories and the forgotten.*
> *It is easy to climb this huge mountain and I start to climb. I see many others, other mountains, mountains of art, without geology, it is form and idea, some dihedral, others crystalline, others large-breasted, others like heaps, garbage, others basalt, no two are alike. There is a man, or more, on almost every mountain. Each with his golden-aura. There is a row of mountains behind my mountain. There, none of these men are to be seen and the mountains are minor ones. It might be that each mountain has a law that builds its hermitage and that this row is new. There are valleys like the one that I came through between the rows of mountains. There is a undulating man there that I tele-see wrapped in a mist of self-lucid light. The total light is zinc colored metallic gray, at times with brown whiles...*
> *I decide to stay here on top, and I build my spiritual temple there. I do not see how my physical body is nourished by the soul, and the soul is fed by heaven, and the heaven of the gods and the gods of Theos.*
> *I draw a rectangle on the soft, loose, warm soil of the mountain, which will be fermented-warm, I pack it down and with whatever I can gather I make a low wall around it with a door to the West. Then I make an altar with a recession for saint books (sanlibros). Five steps before the platform and two next to the altar.*
> *Then I saint sit myself down and pray to my God. He does not show himself, but irradiates, blesses me and suddenly a column of touchable light forms behind the altar.*
> *I mold imprecise gods that will then be replaced. I place them next to the door. They will be statues of saints and of companions and idols.*
> *The interior of the wall is for saint glyphs, saint verses and I record divine revelations, horoscopes and astral messages there. I go out and engrave tentacles with acromanos (acro-hands) on the outside of the wall. Then before the door, I read, pray and suddenly, another column of greatest light. The god blesses.*
> *Then I am mystihappy (happy in a mystical way). I enter the temple, I saint place myself upon the chest of the great silhouette and pray, I see visions. I soar. The visit of my soul becomes clear and I tele-see.* [25]

25 FPK Archives. Undated manuscript, original in neo-Creole.

III. RETURN TO THE HOMELAND
Martinfierrismo

Shortly after meeting Crowley, Xul began to prepare for his return to Buenos Aires, the city he had left a decade before. On June 7, 1922, he informed his "mamas" from Munich that he was planning to go back with Emilio Pettoruti. In another letter, sent to his father on April 4, 1923, Xul wrote:

> *Emilio and I are thinking that we will exhibit there (on Florida St.) four or five months after we arrive, so we will have time to prepare the atmosphere and get to know what it's like. I began to paint things a little larger (...) A month or two in Paris is going to be useful for me..." On June 3, he added, "we are getting ready for the trip with Emilio. We will make a big splash, even if they beat us with sticks! La Razón a short time ago told Buenos Aires that my work is unbalanced. We are pleased to have to fight.* [26]

Xul was conscious of the controversy that he and Pettoruti were going to produce on breaking with the prevailing sense of esthetics. On May 29, 1923, he wrote, "I read something published there and saw some photos. They are very pompier. It is better that way; our splash will be even bigger."
On June 20, 1924, the two painters embarked from Hamburg on the Vigo. They arrived at Buenos Aires on July 31. Just a few days later, according to Pettoruti's notes, they visited Evar Méndez, the director of *Martín Fierro*, the literary journal. The three of them went to the Richmond Café, where they met some of the younger *martinfierristas*. Most were under 25, and Oliverio Girondo, who had just returned from Paris with the edition of his *Veinte poemas para ser leídos en el tranvía* (Twenty Poems to Read on the Tram), was just over 30.
Xul felt immediately at home with these writers, who were fighting an esthetic revolution, battling for the "new", as they affirmed, with an avant-garde tone, in their manifesto written by Girondo:

> *MARTIN FIERRO feels an imperative need to define itself and to summon all those who are capable of perceiving that we find ourselves before a NEW SENSITIVITY and a NEW UNDERSTANDING, that, by reaching agreement among ourselves, we can discover unsuspected horizons and new means and forms of expression.*

Further along in the text, with futuristic emphasis, the manifesto declares:

> *MARTIN FIERRO finds itself, therefore, more at home on a modern transatlantic liner than in a Renaissance palace, and sustains that a good Hispano-Suizo car is a much more perfect work of art than an armchair from the Louis XV period*

In the atmosphere of the *martinfierristas*, where an ongoing wager on the "new" in art and humor reigned, irony and sarcasm were the best critical instruments, an intimate friendship was born, bonded by mutual admiration, between Xul and Borges. Their other friends were Macedonio Fernández, Victoria Ocampo, Oliverio Girondo, Norah Lange and Evar Méndez. Leopoldo Marechal converted Xul into Schultze the astrologer, a singular character in *Adán Buenosayres*. Macedonio Fernández, in his *Papeles de Recienvenido* (Papers of a Newcomer), accurately described the painter.
Xul Solar found a place for the exchange of ideas and understanding in the Martín Fierro group, which published the most cosmopolitan and renovating literary digest in the River Plate region. He felt at ease in a circle that admired Apollinaire and Marinetti. On the other hand, there was no art that interested

26 FPK Archives. Correspondence.

him in Buenos Aires. Alberto Prebisch declared that the art world was dominated by "an ordinary vulgarity" and by the most absolute ignorance of the twentieth century movements. Naturalism with traces of impressionism and picturesque regionalism abounded. [27] Presenting an opposing vision, José María Lozano Mouján affirmed, with satisfaction, that "this anarchy [the avant-garde] has not reached us. Everyone here works as he wants, with no eccentricity. We have no cubist, Dadaist, expressionist, etc. ridiculousness". [28]

Xul Solar accompanied Pettoruti in the preparations for the exhibition at -the Witcomb Gallery, without taking the decision to show his work at that time, as the two artists had planned in Europe. Pettoruti's show opened on October 13, 1924. The critics and the public, before the novelty of the futurist-cubist paintings that Pettoruti had brought from Europe, split into two groups. As Lozano Mouján had pointed out, "they have divided in two impassioned bands. One of the bands, formed by reactionaries, has sounded the alarm to defend our national art from a deadly blow by extravagance, while the other band, on the contrary, considers our art to be sick and desires to inject 'personality' into it. This confrontation opens the debate as to what exactly is meant by national art". [29]

Xul Solar, in an article he wrote about Pettoruti, declared that the art of the period was based on

> *(...) a well-defined tendency toward a simplification of the means of expression, with a clear and solid architecture, toward a pure plasticity that conserves and accentuates the abstract significance of lines, mass, color, all within a freedom of compression and composition.* [30]

Modernity in art finally began to crystallize in Buenos Aires in 1929. It was centered in the production of an important group of artists who had been living in Europe: painters Norah Borges, Horacio Butler, Héctor Basaldúa, Aquiles Badi, Antonio Berni, Juan del Prete, Lino Enea Spilimbergo, Ramón Gómez Cornet, Alfredo Guttero, Raquel Forner, and sculptors Pablo Curatella Manes, Alberto Sibellino, Luis Falcini, José Fioravanti and Alfredo Bigatti. They all belonged to an inspired generation, with only minor differences in how they wanted to transplant the alternatives that they had experienced in Europe with the *rappel-à-l'ordre*.

The artists of this orientation aspired to achieving balance and order, and their painting evolved toward recuperating figurative imagery. But this form of representation was united to elements of post-cubist abstraction, purism, and metaphysical painting along with the reinterpretation of traditional models, especially the Italian primitives. They also sought more instinctive and individual solutions, derived from fauvism, but using conventions that annulled the audacity of the original.

Xul, in this context, always continued acting like a creator who distanced himself from tendencies and from the art establishment. Painting (like symbols) was, for him, no more than a means for joining men, as were his utopian linguistic projects.

On one occasion, in a brief biographical note, Xul defined himself:

> *Self-taught in a variety of fields, within and outside of schools. He lived in Paris and around Europe, during long years. He exhibited in Buenos Aires and other places, and also held individual shows. So, not many of his paintings spread. His principal contribution to a social art is in several coordinated systems of script, writings and symbols, of ample artistic and practical utility, which he is beginning to divulge this year. He has improved current methods of writing and preparing musical scores. He is working on a comprehensive language for America, and for the world, and on the creation of a very simple universal language, with a duodecimal base, to be ready in the near future. He is also working on*

27 The most prestigious artists were: Gramajo Gutiérrez, Panozzi, Cittadini, Vidal, Gigli, Cordiviola, Franco, López Naguil, Guido, Malanca, Tessandori y Bernareggi, followers of naturalist tradition, who cultivated the school of "luminaristic" landscape or folkloric painting.

28 José María Lozano Mouján, *Apuntes para la historia de nuestra pintura y escultura*. Librería de A. García Santos: Buenos Aires, 1922, 217.

29 José María Lozano Mouján, *Atlántida*, October 23, 1924.

30 Xul Solar, "Pettoruti", *Martín Fierro*, op. cit.

several games –combining letters and words of a uniform origin such as the above-mentioned language– that stem from the traditions of chess, cards, signs from Yi King, etc. He has written on a diversity of topics and problems, with the intention that his texts be useful. His wish is that he himself and this world become better. [31]

Exhibitions in Buenos Aires

Xul presented five works at the Primer Salón Libre (First Free Salon) in Buenos Aires in December 1924. The Salon was organized in protest to the traditional National Salon. Atalaya, in his review, declared that "the most curious and uncommonly rare contribution is the work of Xul Solar". [32] Xul exhibited at the First Salon of Independent Artists in November 1925. In June 1926, he took part in the Exhibition of Modern Painters, at *Amigos del Arte* (Friends of Art). The show, which lasted only three days, was organized for Filippo Tomasso Marinetti's visit to Buenos Aires. Norah Borges and Emilio Pettoruti, architects Ernesto Vautier and Alberto Prebisch, and decorator Pedro Illari also participated. A number of the finest representatives of modernity had joined forces. [33]

Xul took part in several exhibitions in 1927: the First Permanent Exhibition of Argentine Art at the Florida Salon, the Great Fair for Young Painters, and the Fair 6 Exhibition at the *Boliche de Arte* (Art Shop). In 1928, he took part in a variety of group shows. Finally in May 1929, five years after he returned to Argentina, he held his first individual show at Room II of the *Amigos del Arte.* [34] Xul exhibited 62 works from different series. Atalaya, in a review, wrote: "His fantasy is nourished partly by himself and in part by Aztec and Hindu mythology, and perhaps Taoism is his greatest objective. That is to say, universal, cosmic, eternal mysticism". [35]

That same year Xul took part, at Alfredo Guttero's request, in the Nuevo Salón (New Salon) or Salón de Pintores Modernos (Salon of Modern Painters), held at the *Amigos del Arte*. He shared the space with Héctor Basaldua, Norah Borges, Horacio Butler, Juan Del Prete, Pedro Figari, Raquel Forner, Ramón Gómez Cornet, Alfredo Guttero, Emilio Pettoruti, Lino Enea Spilimbergo and Miguel Carlos Victorica, among others. In Rosario and La Plata, more artists were added to the list. After that show, Xul took part in a number of group exhibits, especially those organized at the *Amigos del Arte*, and certain salons at the Museum of Fine Arts in La Plata, which was under the direction of Pettoruti. The only award shows in which he took part were, in fact, at that museum.

He held his second individual exhibition in 1940, with 25 works, at the *Amigos del Arte*. Borges, who had just received one of his first paychecks, bought *Tláloc* for 50 pesos, half of the asking price. Xul, in addition, gave him an even larger painting as a gift.

He did not exhibit again for nine years. He then held a show at the Samos Gallery. Borges wrote the text for the catalog. It was the first time he dedicated a text to his friend:

A man versed in every field, curious about everything arcane, father of writings, of languages, of utopias, of mythologies, a guest in hells and in heavens, author and panajedrecista (pan-chess player), and an astrologer, perfect in indulgent irony and in generous friendship. Xul Solar is one of the most singular events of our times. [36]

Borges and Macedonio

The friendship between Jorge Luis Borges and Xul Solar is an important theme in Argentine cultural history. The relationship was based on a mutual interest in language, magic, mysticism and Oriental philosophies. The relationship between the writer and the painter covered a variety of activities:

31 FPK Archives. Manuscript.
32 FPK Archives. Op. cit., p. 83.
33 In 1926 Marinetti traveled to Brasil, Argentina and Uruguay. He arrived in Buenos Aires on June 7 and was received by the 7 *martinfierristas* with a banquet and a tribute published in the review (*Martín Fierro*, no. 29-30, June 8,1926).
34 Antonio Berni and Elena Cid were exhibiting at the same time in other rooms.
35 Atalaya. Op. cit., p. 311.
36 Jorge Luis Borges, prologue to the catalog of the *A. Xul Solar exhibit*, Samos Gallery, July 18 to August 2, 1949.

illustrations and vignettes for books –*El tamaño de mi esperanza* (The Size of My Hope); *El idioma de los argentinos* (The Language of the Argentines); *Un modelo para la muerte* (A Model for Death), written in collaboration with Bioy Casares, and *Manual de zoologia fantástica* (Manual for a Fantastic Zoology), with Margarita Guerrero; collaborations in publications edited by Borges– *Revista Multicolor de los Sábados*, the cultural section of *Crítica* newspaper and *Destiempo* (Out of Step); language, reading and inventions. They also shared an interest in Swedenborg, in the English mystical poets Charles Swinburne and William Blake (particularly the *Prophetic Books*), and in German poets. They read Oriental philosophy. In Atlas, Borges recalls that Xul brought to his attention Deussen's *History of Philosophy*, a study that preceded the Greeks, starting with India and China and dedicating a chapter to Gilgamesh. The study of *I Ching*, or the Book of Mutations, was another motive for frequent meetings. [37]

Xul's linguistic projects, such as neocriollo and panlengua held a special attraction for Borges. He found a certain similitude with John Wilkins' analytical language. An eloquent testimony to this admiration is his dedication for "El idioma infinito" (The Infinite Language). There is no doubt, also, that "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis, Tertius" can be read as a parodic homage to Xul's linguistic inventions. [38]

Borges often expressed his admiration for Xul's inventions and the wisdom he derived from the universe of the Hermetic: his modified piano, the never-finished *panjogo* (pan-game), the "new religions", his modified tarot, the cabala, astrology, and many other topics of mutual interest.

Borges gave a remarkable lecture at the inauguration of the Memorial to Xul Solar exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in La Plata in 1968. The presentation was filled with affectionate references to their mutual complicity. At one point in the talk, Borges recognized that when he invented something, it was really Xul inventing it through him or, perhaps, in spite of him. In time, this talk became one of the most relevant testimonies regarding the friendship between the two major founders of modernity in the River Plate region.

Macedonio Fernández also admired Xul and enjoyed his friendship with the artist. They spent evenings together at the Royal Keller, together with Borges, Scalabrini Ortiz, Evar Méndez, Hidalgo and others. In a letter dated "a Thursday in the summer of 1926-1927", the author of *Papeles de Recienvenido* (Papers of a Newcomer) wrote, emphasizing that his judgment was shared "by almost everyone we have anything to do with, like Pettoruti, Hidalgo and Borges":

> *Be heroic in your creative work so that we will soon see you famous; you are one of the personally pure singularities in the current human world; sit down and think or write with heroic audacity, and follow the advice of William James, work without paying attention to lack of energy, sluggish physical sensations, fears or other sentiments. It is easy; after ten minutes of work any resistance will vanish.* [39]

Jorge Luis Borges commented, in a talk, that Macedonio and Xul never managed to understand each other because "they lived in different worlds". The writer was essentially a skeptic, while Xul believed in "the gods". Macedonio thought logically, in an intellectual way, while Xul patterned his thoughts in the form of myths or fables. In 1941, nevertheless, Fernández dedicated a book to Xul, with a stirring declaration of friendship.

> *To Xul Solar In whom we have all found the virtue of a charmer of hostile Reality. Inventor, in addition, of the only language universally not spoken probably because it has been launched without any Pause or Silence of its own. No one dares to speak it without*

37 Jorge Luis Borges, "Laprida 1214", en *Atlas*, Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1984.
38 Jorge Luis Borges, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius", *Sur*, 68, Buenos Aires, March 1940: 30-46.
39 FPK Archives, correspondence.
40 Macedonio Fernández, *Una novela que comienza*, 1941.

finding out beforehand how to do it, so as not to be exposed to the fear of not knowing when and how to be quiet in "neocreol". With profound admiration and friendship. Yours Macedonio Fernández. [40]

Avant-garde and identity

Emilio Schulz died unexpectedly in April 1925. The "mamas", who were still in Italy, returned to Buenos Aires six months later. Xul was filled with doubts about his future. He wrote a letter to Clorinda and Agustina Solari, in which, besides referring to his father's death, he commented, "I find myself not very well prepared yet, and two years in Paris or London and some months in Germany would do me a lot of good, I believe. In any case, I must stay here for at least several months to finish trying to get to know all the important people there are here." He never traveled beyond the borders of the neighboring countries, however, and did all of his work in Buenos Aires. His work was rarely included in group shows abroad.

During that year of grief, he painted several watercolors with festive themes, joyful marches, rituals or dances, with Argentine flags as well as those of other nations. He included symbols such as the drago (dragon), generally with the body of a serpent. He used graphic symbolism frequently, with five –or six pointed– stars, the Star of David and the swastika (tetraskelion). The signs of the planets were repeated in some of his watercolors: Venus, Saturn, Mars, Mercury, etc.; in one work, the Southern Cross was represented, indicating its celestial location.

Xul's work at this time contained occasional references to urban criollismo that appeared in the periodical, Martin Fierro. The moment is one of contradictions between a new sensibility and tradition, between cosmopolitan universality and the desire to build a national identity. Artists' interest oscillated between the machines of the new world of technology and inconsequential local anecdotes.

The first works of the series were dated 1925: Fiesta patria (Patriotic Celebration) and the two versions of Ronda, País, Milicia (Patrol, Country, Militia), reproduced in the June 1926 issue of Martín Fierro. Then came Bárbaros (Barbarians), dated 1926, and Drago (Dragon), done in 1927.

Xul manifested his interest in criollismo. In an unpublished article, dedicated to Pettoruti, he wrote:

We are and we feel new; our new goal does not follow old and foreign roads. Let us differentiate ourselves. We have come of age and we still have not finished our wars for independence. Let Europe's moral supervision come to an end now. Let us assimilate what is digestible, let us love our teachers, but let us not love only the Meccas across the seas any more. We have had no artistic geniuses to guide us (nor to tyrannize us) in our short history. The ancient Cuzcos and Palenques and Tenechtitlans were demolished (nor are we more than just a red race). We can clearly see the urgency to break the invisible chains (the kind that are the strongest) that keep the great Iberian America with 90 Million inhabitants in the status of a colony in so many fields. [41]

The coincidence with Jorge Luis Borges' stance at that time is evident. Borges published several essays and his first books of poetry (*Fervor de Buenos Aires,* 1923; *Luna de enfrente*, 1925 and *Cuaderno San Martín*, 1929) in an intentionally vernacular language. At the beginning of *El tamaño de mi esperanza* (The Size of My Hope), written in 1926, Borges declared, "I want to address myself to the criollos, to the men that experience life and death in this land, not to those who believe that the sun and the

40 Macedonio Fernández, *Una novela que comienza*, 1941.
41 FPK Archives, original manuscript, undated, possibly 1924.

moon are in Europe". For a time, Borges felt, without any sense of contradiction, a certain antagonism to the cosmopolitan, defending a vernacular that was the opposite of European culture. [42]

Architectures and mountains

Xul returned to the subject of his so-called 'architectures' once back in Buenos Aires. He adapted a geometric structure with a modernistic appearance. He added his visions of cities and ports to his growing body of iconography. Xul began to paint his 'imaginary countries' around 1931. They were, generally, larger in size, done in watercolor or gouache on paper glued to cardboard. In most cases, the works show a series of wall-screens, created with a certain illusion of space, of autonomy and depth. Arches abound, metamorphic walls have faces, articulated serpents spawn, strange people appear and rigid flags fly on poles, among them Argentina's. The space is, at times, theatrical and ambiguous, and seems to cast Xul's visionary dreams in the guise of reality.

Xul painted flying cities with a great display of fantastic fancy between 1934 and 1942. *Vuel villa* (Fly Town), done in 1936, was a complex version of this subject. The city, with its strange buildings floating in space at the edge of a land-based city, was represented with humor. It was sustained by aerostatic balloons, whose multiple propellers were powered by motors belching dense clouds of smoke. That same year, Xul painted his versions of *Mestizos de avión y gente* (Crossbreeding the airplane and people).

Xul worked on a series of mythical landscapes, with mountains and architectures, between 1943 and 1946. He usually employed a range of tones of gray and ochre, using fewer symbols and words. One of these works, *Muros y escaleras* (Walls and Staircases), dated 1944/III, painted with gouache on paper, was a landscape based on somber walls with stairs and ramps. It represented a visionary scene that included a universally used symbol from religious or Hermetic iconography. Stairs and ramp-like staircases, particularly, denote an emphasis on the ascendant. The ideas that this symbol summarizes are the ascension, progression and communication between the diverse levels of verticality.

In the painting, several figures carry out different activities. There is a small person with his arms raised, in an attitude of prayer or invocation, on the top of a tall building. Beyond that scene, a man, perhaps a pilgrim, goes up the ramp. A woman stops on another ramp, watches a guardian who has stuck his head out of a window. A saint on a platform, his head encircled in an aureole, reads a book. A strange head with its hair illuminated appears in the foreground to the left.

These works bring to mind a phrase from the *Book of the Dead*: "My ladder to see the gods is already in place". The mountains and the architectural constructions with steps are reminiscent of Sakkara, of Mesopotamian ziggurats and teocallis of pre-Columbian America. As is the case in these architectural monuments, there is a tacit reference to the ascension toward the spiritual world.

In another series of mystical landscapes, done in 1948 and 1949, with hills, staircases and ramps, a zigzagging rhythm predominates, set forth in broad waves. The small constructions, or sanctuaries, excavated in the rocks, seem to be hermitages destined for pilgrims or anchorites who have abandoned the world to dedicate themselves to devotional practices.

Xul introduced other elements into his work around 1950, which he took from the cabala: the *Pan-tree* * or universally cabalistic-astrological trees. He painted a number of versions, maintaining the structure of a tree with 3 branches or columns, but modifying the number of Sefirot, or emanations of God (from 10 to 12, following the astrological system he employed to adapt everything).

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* In English in the original. (Tr. Note)

42 In "El idioma infinito" (The Infinite Language), published in *Proa*, July 1925, Borges thanks the creator of *neocriollo*: "I dedicate these notes to the great Xul Solar, because my conception of them is not free of guilt".

IV. UTOPIAS
Astrological correspondences

Facing a world that he considered limited by the hegemony of rationalism and the consequences it produced, Xul Solar conceived a great transforming utopia. He tried to modify everything to reach his much sought-after "communion", what Hermes Trismegistus called "the miracle of the unique thing". Xul wanted to adapt the most diverse questions to a state of cosmic correspondence, believing it was possible to achieve a "correspondence" between religions, language, art, games, architecture, numeric systems, music, etc.

Xul, in addition to being a painter, was essentially an astrologer. He often received fellow astrologers at his home on Laprida Street. He also thrived on analyzing the astrological charts of friends and visitors, convinced that he could get to know them better that way. The archives at the Pan Klub contain many astral charts of artists, writers and poets of very different origins. [43] Xul painted a series of work based on this theme, including *Zodiaco* (Zodiac), a large watercolor, and a diptych composed of *Signos zodiacales impares* (Odd Signs of the Zodiac) and *Signos zodiacales pares* (Even Signs of the Zodiac), painted in 1953. There are several outstanding works among his "horoscope portraits": *Miguel Angel Asturias* (1952), *Horóscopo de Lita* (1953), *Horóscopo de Manuel Mujica Láinez* (1953) and his own self-portrait, *Horóscopo de Xul Solar* (1953). He had painted two "horoscope portraits" of Victoria Ocampo many years before, in 1927. At an undetermined point in time, he wrote a defense of astrology:

> *Many play with astrology superficially, because they have not made any effort to delve more deeply into this marvelous science. Astrology is as precise as mathematics, although it has not yet reached a similar degree of development. (...) The time will come when this science will be the basis for future governments. By using its tools, it is possible to calculate coming events as, for example, those that are contained in the pyramid of Cheops. There is no doubt that these calculations are a product of the application of astrology (...).* [44]

Xul believed in the plurality of the stars and the gods. Once, according to Borges, Xul said, "How strange it is that people think it is better to have just one God. That is a mistake. If God is good, it is better to have many gods. The more gods, the better". [45] He believed in the gods that corresponded to the planets. Each individual could choose one of these twelve planet-related religions, according to his or her predominant sign. All of his thinking revolved around the concept of Unity, but he never revealed all of the keys to the system. These had to be discovered by the disciple. Xul had invented a flag for Latin America, which was composed of the colors of the rainbow, each band a loose strip, like a banner.

Xul jotted his ideas down for many years. He also kept a record of his work schedules, poems and visions in notebooks, all written in a complex script, which was small, tightly-knit, moving in different directions, and laced with corrections and deletions. The texts are filled with abbreviations and words in creol. Some pages are illustrated with succinct sketches, drawn in pencil. Many utopian proposals appear: "priests, rabbis, Islamic clerics, magicians: in 1." "Construction of the spiritual Temple: saint book, saint scripts, saint verses, divine revelations, horoscopes, astral messages." "Cities: New kind of race. Cities that are the colors of melodies. *Buques=Baus* (Boats=architectures)". In a note about eugenics, the science of perfecting the human race, Xul proposed: "Union of the South and expansion. Make Buenos Aires bigger. *Transformiurbes* (transform cities), plan them.

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43 Charts of painters Carmelo Arden Quin, Juan Battle Planas, Norah Borges, Joaquín Torres García, Alfredo Guttero, Tomás Maldonado and Emilio Pettoutti; art critics Julio Payró and Jorge Romero Brest; writers Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Macedonio Fernández, Ricardo Güiraldes, Leopoldo Marechal, Victoria Ocampo, Ernesto Sábato and Raúl Scalabrini Ortíz; and musician Juan Carlos Paz, among others, can be found in the Archives.

44 FPK Archives, undated manuscript.

45 Jorge Luis Borges, lecture at the Fundación San Telmo, Buenos Aires, September 3, 1980.

Comúnicas (communications): roads, vielvias, canals." He also thought of a *neolengua* (new language) and a *neocultura* (new culture) with "sects, polygamy, andría (primacy of the male), *divor*, *neourbes* (new cities), *neocostumbre* (new habit).

He dedicated some notes to "a project for a country and its history and events;" in others, he indicated certain artistic, literary and philosophic preferences:

> *Proyecto de país i su istoria yi sucesos* (Country project and its history and events). [geography. *divos* (gods), *daimos* (demons). *humania* (humans), fauna. flora. gea (mineral wealth). */producia* (production), industry, general commerce. */costums, inventions. revolus* (revolutions). *War.*
> *My environment, Rimbaud, Poe, Debussy, Malarmé, Wagner, Blake, the Spirit* (Geist) *of Klee,* (A Rebours [Huysmans], Fleurs du Mal [Baudelaire], 1001 Nights). *Science: Spiritudrawings, Astroneo, Biology, Microscience, Metaphysics. UTOPIA.*

Keria cuidra Lita

Xul Solar married Micaela Cadenas (Lita) on August 13, 1946. He had first met her ten years before. He chose the precise moment of the ceremony with great care. According to Micaela, he prepared "a zodiacal chart to determine the most propitious date for our wedding". Lita became the painter's *keria cuidra* (cherished caretaker). In the correspondence they maintained while she was on vacation in Cordoba (Xul had remained in Buenos Aires, engrossed in his projects), the letters were written entirely in *neocriollo*. One of them, dated January 16, 1943, starts: *"Muy keria cocluista, coneocriolla, ziéliha*: in others, written in 1945, he began: *"Gran keria cuidra"*.

The correspondence between Xul and Lita began almost a decade before; the first letter is dated 1937.[46] In a note dated 1945, Xul commented on his work with *xadrez* (chess) and with a new form of script: "Agora probo xi fazile mais nueva grafía, mas no halé aun lo gesto pa corte cada palabra (...) [I have now proven how easy my new script is, but I have not yet discovered a mechanism for ending each word.]". On November 27, 1939 at 12:25, Xul wrote down his idea for the *Pan Klub* (Universal Club). In a letter dated January 15, 1940, Lita was already mentioning the *Buenos Aires Pan Kléu*; by 1945, she had changed the term to *Pan Kluis*.

After Xul's death, Micaela Cadenas put the project for the Pan Klub into action, but she did not live to see it completed. She could only guess the progress of the work, as she was then sick and weak. Natalio Povarché would take her in a wheelchair to a point on the first floor where she could watch the second floor being built.

The Xul Solar Museum was inaugurated five years after the death of Micaela. The Museum offers a permanent exhibition of a selection of Xul's works from different periods. The exhibition space is built on the ground floor level of a building that is over a century old, where there were two homes (1212 and 1216 Laprida Street) with a garden in the back. The upper floor of 1214 has been conserved, without any modifications, to display all of Xul's objects, documents, and books, in addition to his small workshop on the terrace. [47]

Xul bought a house in the Delta of Tigre, at the Los Ciruelos Pier on the Lujan River, in 1954. He installed a workshop of his own design there, where he returned to his imaginary architectures, abandoning the mystical bent of the 1920's. He worked playfully on a series of painting-projects of houses for the islands. The buildings, mounted on stilts that were sunk into the river, are composed of articulated, multicolored modules, with pitched roofs and small stairways. Other architectural schemes are based on geometric elements that appear to imitate children's games with exchangeable

46 Micaela (Lita) Cadenas attended the astrology classes that Xul Solar gave at his home, 1212 Laprida Street, in 1936.
47 The project for the Xul Solar Museum, based on the painter's architectural innovations, was prepared by Architect Pablo Tomás Beitía.

parts. The reference to modernist architecture is inevitable. The modules in some of the watercolors contain large letters that spell out allusive phrases.

Pensiformas (Thought forms)

Xul spent more and more time on the island after 1957, living in virtual isolation. During this period, he invented, with much patience and great effort, a systematization of pictorial styles that he called *grafías plastútiles* (artistically useful scripts). The system was designed to integrate texts and forms, his *pensiformas* (thought forms in *neocriollo*) for transmitting phrases, proverbs or spiritual thoughts. Previously, in the 1930's, Xul had experimented with stenographic writings, but he realized then that he was not trying to create a system of annotation, but rather a new language. He intended that this "artistic writing" could be read rapidly and would serve to facilitate mankind's capacity to communicate ("communion").

Each painting contains codified phrases that are easy to decipher if one knows the code: *"Pax, Worke, Love"*; *"Lu kene ten lu base nel nergie, lu kene no e kan"* (Knowledge has its foundations in energy; without energy, knowledge is not possible). He painted a number of imaginary *retratos-grafía* (script-portraits) in 1961, using the cursive system, of figures such as Jesus, Moses, Crowley and Steiner. The project consisted of creating 12 (a key number in his system) styles of script. He was only able to achieve half of them: *"geométrico"* (geometric), with flat geometric figures; *"silábico"* (syllabic), with modifications of the Roman alphabet in block letters: *"guardas"* (borders), with geometric motifs and repeated elements; *"cursiva"* (cursive), with shorthand and hieroglyphics; *"vegetales"* (vegetal), with plants; *"antropomórficas & zoomórficas"* (anthropomorphic & zoomorphic), with human or animal forms. Xul Solar planned to exhibit the work in an art gallery. His death in April 1963 prevented him from doing so.

Languages

Linguistic projects occupied a place of preference among Xul's varied activities. He thought that the Spanish language was several centuries behind the times. "It is a language with words that are too long, with too much cacophony," he once commented. He had created a language designed for the countries of Latin America early in his career: criol or neocriollo. It is a kind of lingua franca or languagé for interchange, with modifications of Spanish and Portuguese words and some taken from English, and with a singular use of abbreviation. He pointed out in an interview in 1951:

> *I am (...) the creator of a language that all of Latin America is demanding. [It is called] criol or neocriollo. At this point in time and within its frontiers, America, in the midst of a disturbed world, provides a remarkable example of living together, of fraternalism, of mutual respect, above all in the countries of Latin origin. What better to consolidate this tendency of a new concept of effective good neighborliness than a common language composed of words, syllables, roots taken from the two predominant languages of Central and South America: Spanish and Portuguese (...).* [48]

The interest that *neocriollo* awoke in the writers that were close to Xul can be seen in Marechal's *Adán Buenosayres*, published in 1948. In one of the chapters, in a conversation with Ethel Amundsen, astrologer Shultze (Xul Solar) explains the fundamentals of the language that he had invented:

> *The Neocriollo language will be both metaphysical and poetic, with neither logic nor grammar. Its hands and its feet will be of a magnitude unknown today; and they will*

48 Gregory Sheerwood, "Xul Solar, campeón mundial de panajedrez y el inquieto creador de la panlengua" *Mundo Argentino*, August 1, 1951.

> *respond to a complicated system of levers of second and third degree. (...) I have already told you that Neocriollo will be nourished with perfumes, dews and other quintessential elements, thanks to which its digestive tube will of an absolute simplicity, emitting no rotten gases or repugnant mierdicolas (elements of excrement).*

Xul Solar published one of his mystical visions (San Signos – Saint Signs) in neocriollo, titled "Notes on neocriollo, written on September 11 1926 at 12_."

> *Once again I saw and recognized that procession of angels, in another blue southern sky, located above the tall temple, of columns and multi-floors, green and blue, its foundation of many cloud layers, above its roof are multileveled clouds, and in the distance, dense woods and gardens. It corresponds to the temple of earlier times, teorue, there are souls, the wanderers pass by here, there are many that are included in the pillars and walls, praying, like in the church. And above this blue southern sky there is another ancient one, and above this other sky I did not see anything, I just perceived networks of jaldi rays. So I found myself again in the world of teoamue, "like in endless clouds, per".* [49] *[See the version in original neocriollo in Spanish text.]*

Another of Xul's linguistic projects, one that also consumed much of his time, was *panlengua*, his project for a universal language. This 'invention' was designed to create a universal language that could be spoken and understood by all of humanity. The idea stems from recuperating the language that was based on the original tongue of Adam, a theme which has been developed in multiple versions by theology, in the liturgy and in myths. It was a language of divine origin, in the beginning, which could permit one to communicate directly with God. That unique language would have been sufficient for all of humanity if the sons of Adam and Eve had remained in Paradise, and original sin and the expulsion from Eden had never occurred. It is possible that there was once a time that a kind of primary language was used, even though it no longer served for communicating with the Creator. But the fall of Babel occurred and brought the total disintegration of the tongue of Adam and the proliferation of a countless number of languages that were incomprehensible among themselves. Almost every mythology contains some version of Babel. From that moment on, the world was divided by linguistic frontiers and by difficulties in communication.

The dream of reestablishing a language that predated Babel was a constant in Xul's search. Many languages, throughout the centuries, claimed the right to be considered universal: Greek, Latin, French, Dutch and Spanish. When it was ascertained that no one natural language could restore the harmony of Eden, a search for an artificial language began, one that all men could share. Leibnitz, Spinosa and other thinkers were convinced that a shared language would end many of humanity's conflicts and mistakes. There were many attempts at building a universal language; Esperanto was one of the best known.

Xul Solar, with his customary zeal, sought to construct an artificial language that would provide universal linguistic harmony. He conceived his utopian Panlengua. According to Xul, it was "a monosyllabic language, without grammar, with numerical and astrological elements, that could be combinable at will." His dictionary was the game board for panjogo. "The consonants," Xul explained, "are the pieces of the game and the vowels with their combinations are the squares of the board, which total 179."

49 Xul Solar, "Apuntes de neocriollo", *Azul*, 2. 11, August 11, 1931.

Panjuego

One of Xul's most complex inventions (in creol, more "pli"), which included all of the elements of his system of equivalencies, was *panajedrez* (universal chess), also known as *panjuego*, panjogo or criollo chess. Xul began to develop the game in 1939 or 1940 and worked on it for seven years. The inventor of the game wrote in a typed text with handwritten corrections:

> *The motive or usefulness, and we can also say the uniqueness of this new game, is in its capacity to assemble various autonomous means of expression, that is to say, languages, in various fields that correspond to one foundation, composed of the zodiac, the planets and duodecimal numeration. This means that there are coincidences between the phonetics of a language built on polarities, the negative and the positive and a neutral midpoint, and the notes, chords and timbres of a free music, and the basic lineal elements of an abstract art, which in addition is writing. The compartments or squares also coincide, with the degrees of the circle with the daily and annual movements of the sky, historical time and the human drama expressed in the stars.* [50]

Each piece of *panjuego* corresponds to a consonant (the pawns, however, are numbers), in a way that, according to the position on the board (each square is marked with a vowel), permits the formation of different words. According to Xul's affirmation, it was possible to form words by the "hundreds of thousands, and using several pieces together, by the millions". The game served as a "dictionary for an a priori philosophic language." In addition, each major piece represented a planet and, with the necessary information (its placement in the heavens), one could track its position year after year with an astrological almanac, "that is to say, its influences or character."

The board is divided in 13 by 13 rows of alternating black and white squares, which possess a complex relationship with the planetary rotation of the day. The pieces, which are similar to those used in chess, represent the signs of the zodiac, the fixed and common cardinal points, respectively. There are also new pieces: Contratorre (Countertower), Bitorre (Bi-tower), Tritore (Tri-tower) and Trialfil (Tri-bishop). The pieces, handcrafted by Xul himself, are flat, designed to be stacked, "which exponentially increases the combinations and the variants of the game." The pieces are painted with representations of the zodiac and the planets.

The numerical system Xul adopted for developing the game is duodecimal. Each player starts with 30 pieces, in addition to access to a wild piece, which both players have the right to use. The game begins with no pieces on the board. Once the game starts, it is possible to build stacks of three. Pieces taken by an adversary can be turned over and used again in the game. This "complex duodecimal chess game", as Borges called it, had multiple and unpredictable possibilities, and the rules were never definitive. Xul changed them all the time because he found them excessively elemental.

He also invented a modification for Tarot that he called *Tarot con coecos astri* (Tarot with astrological correspondence). The deck is composed of 24 cards with designs painted in gouache by Xul. Twelve have personifications of the signs of the zodiac, similar to those found in his zodiac paintings. Each sign has a number corresponding to the duodecimal system. The rest of the pack is illustrated with well-known figures of the esoteric world of Tarot: The Magician, The Wounded Tower, The Hanged Man, The Moon, The Sun, The Hermit, The Wheel of Fortune, etc. There are no written rules to permit one to learn how to use the cards.

50 FPK Archives undated manuscript.

Universal Reforms

Xul was always interested in music. He spoke of his "dramatic and musical poem" in an autobiographical text written between 1911 and 1912. His father had given him his first music lessons, using an old zither that can still be seen at the Xul Solar Museum. He later studied violin but abandoned playing music because of an accident he suffered at 13. In 1906 he acquired a piano and, according to Francisco Luis Bernárdez, Xul had owned a harmonium in Europe. He bought another piano in 1930, which he sold four years later to purchase a Dulcitone harmonium. He experimented at altering the instrument's keyboard. After his marriage, he also modified Lita's piano. Xul's notes from 1929-1930, written in a musical exercise notebook, confirm his theoretical interests.

Xul also tried to apply his crusade to simplify everything to music. He once wrote in a brief summary of his activities that he had devised "a shorthand for writing music, with no accidents, no code, corresponding to a uniform keyboard, simplifying the actual design, which could shorten the learning process of music and of piano and organ by a third."

Xul worked for a long time on modifying the traditional piano. He reduced the length of the keyboard by almost two octaves. He placed the keys in three rows; the surface of each had a different design in relief so as to permit the blind to identify it. The keys were colored, because "the color of each note has its own vibration, many octaves higher than the number of vibrations of each string. F, for example, corresponds to infrared or ultraviolet, and the other notes to the colors of the rainbow." A piano of the future, equipped with Xul's keyboard, could permit the insertion of quarter tones in intermediate rows of keys, a detail that is not possible today. These adaptations would permit a system for writing music without sharps or flats, within a system that could be compatible to the present one.

Xul had another concern, one that might be taken with a touch of humor. He wanted to transform the human anatomy with artificial appendices. In an article he wrote in 1957, he stated, "There is much to say, and there always will be, on the topic of increasing the capacity and the organs of the physical body of the actual human being, on the one hand, and on the increase in population of mental entities, on the other." The variations included everything from inert appendices such as steel springs beneath the sole of the feet to a radio receiver with batteries, powered by nervous energy, incorporated into the skull, protected by four small natural horns. [51]

He also created a puppet theater for plays based on mystical or Hermetic subjects with astrological characters, using an iconography similar to that employed in his zodiac paintings. It was an authentic theater of Fortune.

He also utilized mathematics in his schemes for universal reform. He modified the decimal system, in order to adapt it to his duodecimal zodiacal order. He assigned the letter "Q" a value of 10 and "&" one of 11, and "10" the value of 12. He began to date his paintings with this numeration in 1171 (1959, according to our conventional system).

Xul said that he was the world's champion of a game that no one knew; that he was the master of a writing that no one read; the creator of a new way to write music which facilitated the study of the piano; the director of a theater without performances; the creator of a universal language, *panlengua*, which contributed to getting people to know each other better; the creator of 12 pictorial techniques (*grafías plastiútiles*). He was also the maker of a language that Latin America clamored for insistently.[52] When he affirmed that no one was aware of his inventions, that no one read his writings, spoke his languages or played his games, he would add with utopian and ironic humor, "not yet".

Xul Solar died, with a rosary in his hand, in his home on the island in Tigre on April 9, 1963. He was 75. Lita has said that he did not believe in death as an absolute. He once wrote in neocriollo, in a *grafía plastiútil*, "Death is the gateway to life and vice-versa."

51 Xul Solar, "Algo semiótico sobre mejoras anatómicas y entes nuevos", *Lyra*, XV, nos. 164-165, 1957.

ILLUSTRATIONS *

* Whener titles are written in neo-Creole and translation is posible, the English version will appear betwen brackets, respecting the peculiar syntax and morphology of Xul's language. Otherwise, only the title either in neo-Creole or in other language will be recorded. (Tr. Note)

1. *Nido de fénices*
(Many Phoenix's Nest), 1914,
oil on cardboard, 22 x 26.6 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

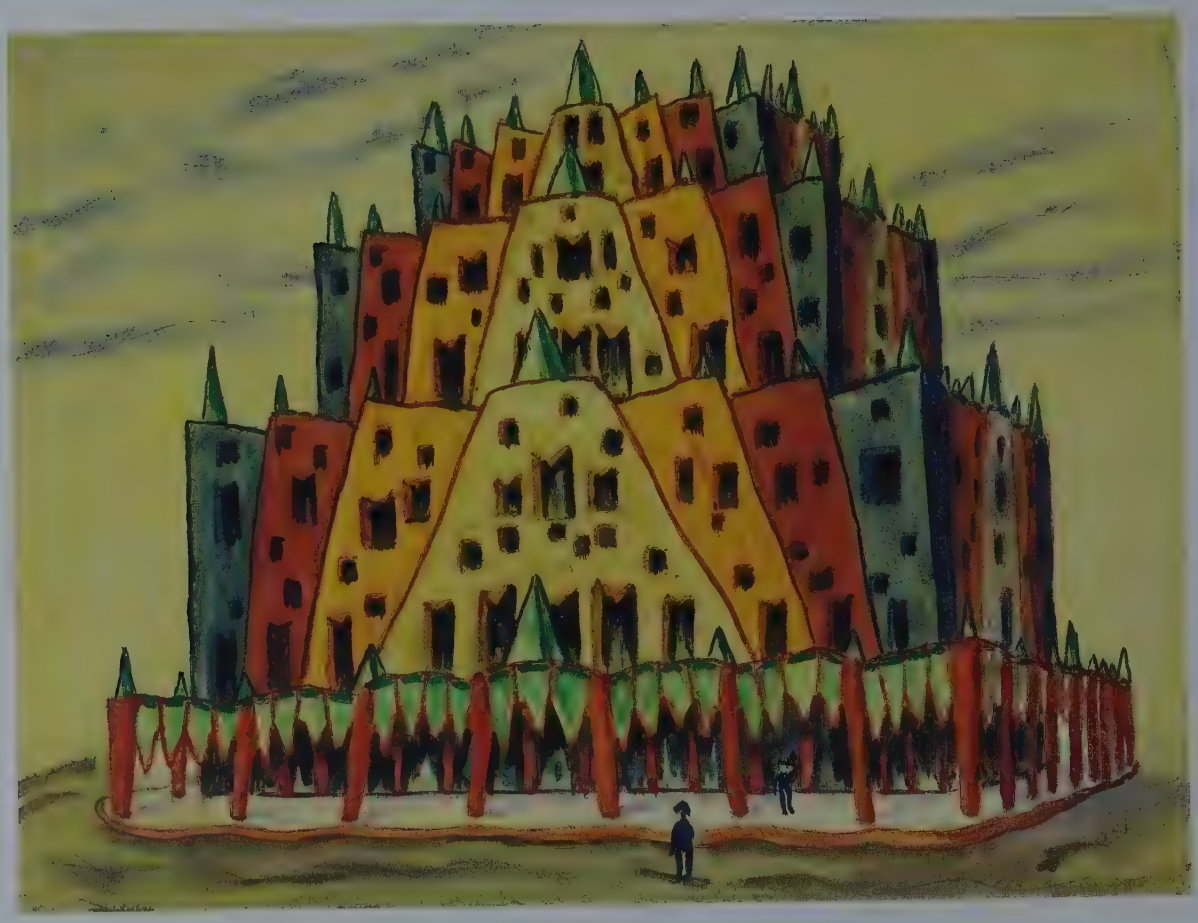
2. *Gestation*, 1914
watercolor on paper, 14.8 x 14.8 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

3. *Dos Anjos*
(Two Angels), 1915
watercolor on paper, 36 x 27 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

4. *Burial*, 1915
watercolor on paper, 15 x 21 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

5. *Landscape*, 1916
oil on cardboard, 18 x 22.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

6. *Saint Francis*, 1917,
watercolor on paper, 37 x 23 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



7. *Project*, 1918,
watercolor on paper, 19.5 x 24.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

8. *Project*, 1918,
watercolor on paper, 21 x 25 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

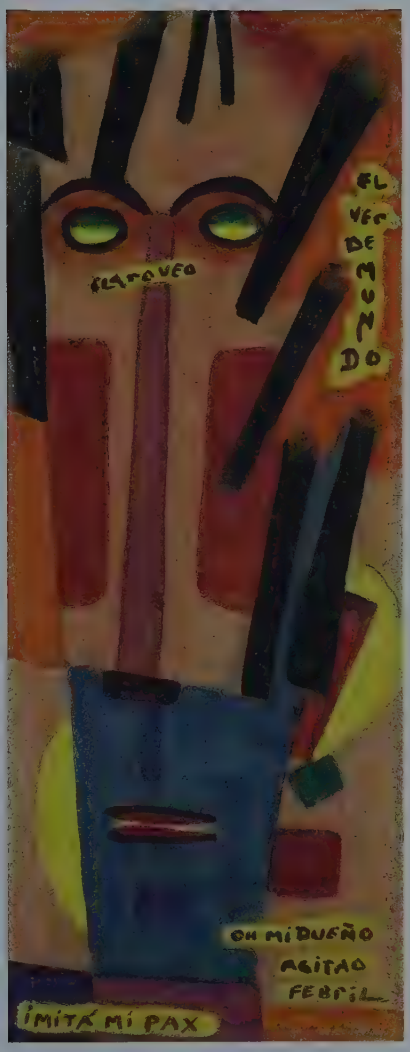
9. *Another World*, 1918,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 21 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

10. *Solar*, 1918,
watercolor on paper, 15 x 20.1 cm.
Private collection.

11. *Worshipped Face*
(original title in English), 1918,
watercolor on paper, 25.1 x 20.8 cm.
Private collection.

12. *Bird*, 1918,
watercolor on paper, 10.9 x 9.8 cm.
Private collection.

13. *Tapestry* (1), 1918,
watercolor on paper, 15.8 x 12 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



14. *Imitá mi pax*
(Imitate my Peace), 1919,
watercolor on paper, 21.1 x 7.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

15. *Flags Love Reaches You*, 1919
watercolor on paper, 21.1 x 7.5 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

16. *Woman*, 1919
gouache on paper, 12 x 16 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

17. *Couple*, 1919
watercolor on paper, 10.13 x 16.3 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

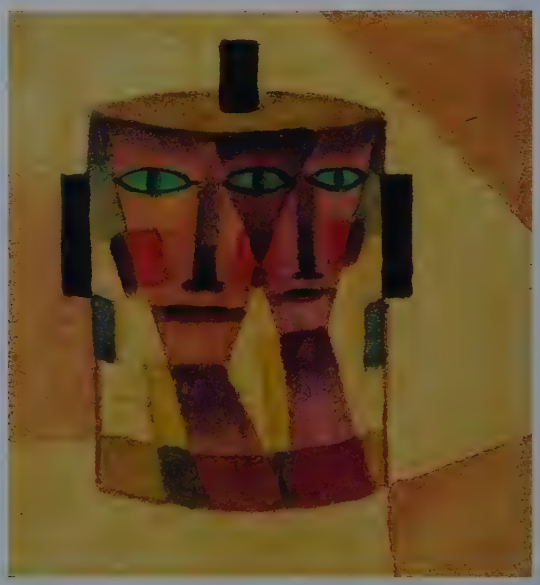
18. *I Go Up, I'll Reach You...*, 1919
watercolor on paper, 21.1 x 7.5 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

19. *Tota pax*
(Total Peace), 1919,
watercolor on paper, 21.5 x 7.5 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

20. *Serpents*, 19191,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

21. *Tuamorme dáforma ivita*
(Yourlovegives Meshape Andlife), 1919,
watercolor on paper, 10 x 10 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

22. *N. Title*, 1919
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



23. *Bird*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

24. *Two Faces*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 21 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

25. *Face*, 1919,
watercolor on cardboard, 10.5 x 10.5 cm.
Private collection.

26. *Almost a Flight*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 11 x 9.8 cm.
Private collection.

27. *Other Tree Trunks*, 1919,
gouache on paper, 16 x 21 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

28. *Face*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 10.5 x 10.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

29. *Let us Try Ourselves*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 21 x 7.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

30. *Pliente*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

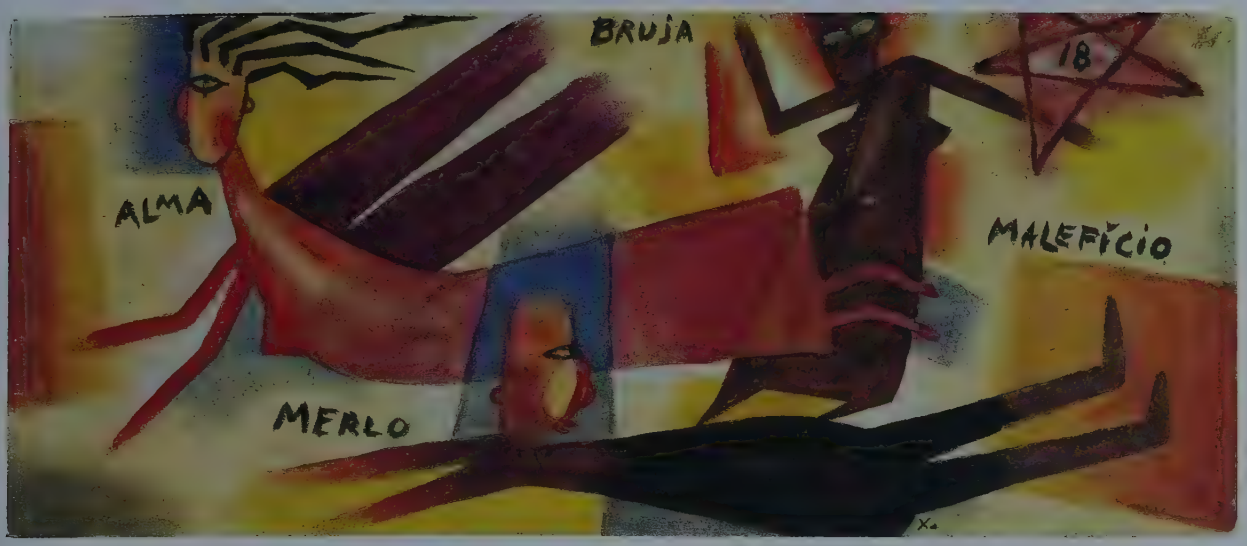
31. *Pliente*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

32. *Wings*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 10 x 24 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

33. *Places*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 23.4 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

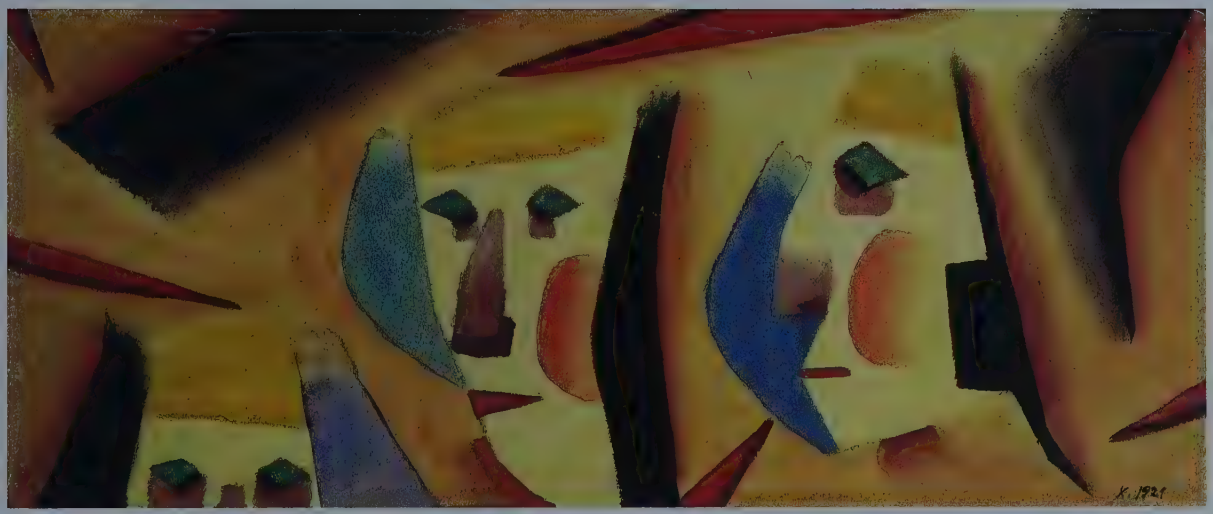
34. *Face*, 1919,
watercolor on paper, 10.5 x 10.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

35. *I Don't Get Tired*, 1919
watercolor on paper, 10.5 x 10.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



36. *Soul,* 1919,
watercolor on paper, 10 x 23 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

37. *Dos dragos*
(Two Dragons), 1920
watercolor on paper, 14 x 21 cm.
Private collection.

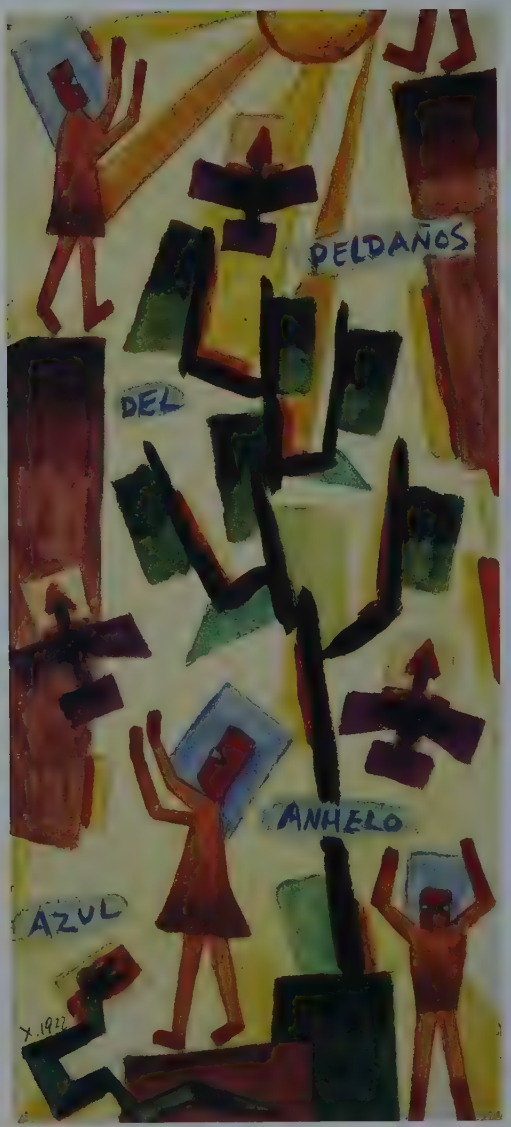


38. *Two Faces,* 1921,
watercolor on paper, 10.4 x 25.4 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

39. *Lago monti*
(Lake Hills), 1921,
watercolor on paper, 22.5 x 31 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

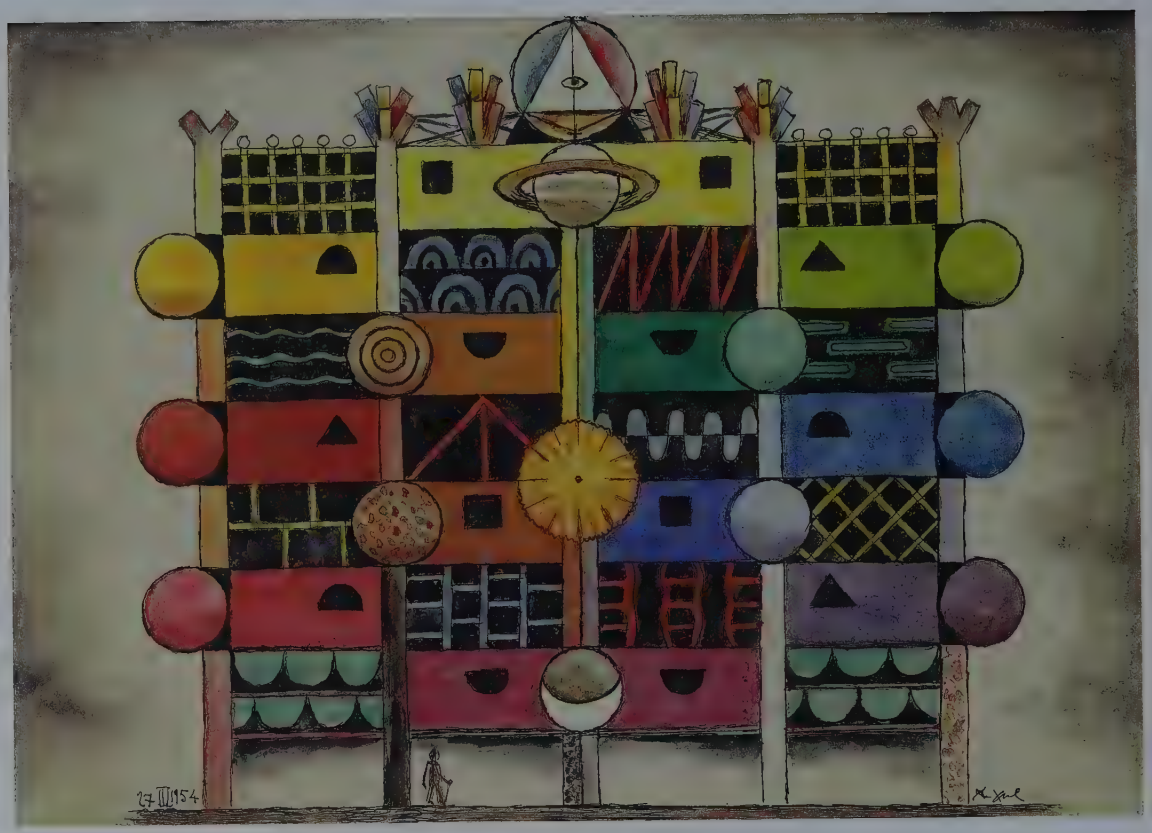
40. *BauBiombo*
(ArchitectureScreen), 1921,
watercolor on paper, 23.9 x 18.9 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

41. *Hail*, 1921,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 21 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



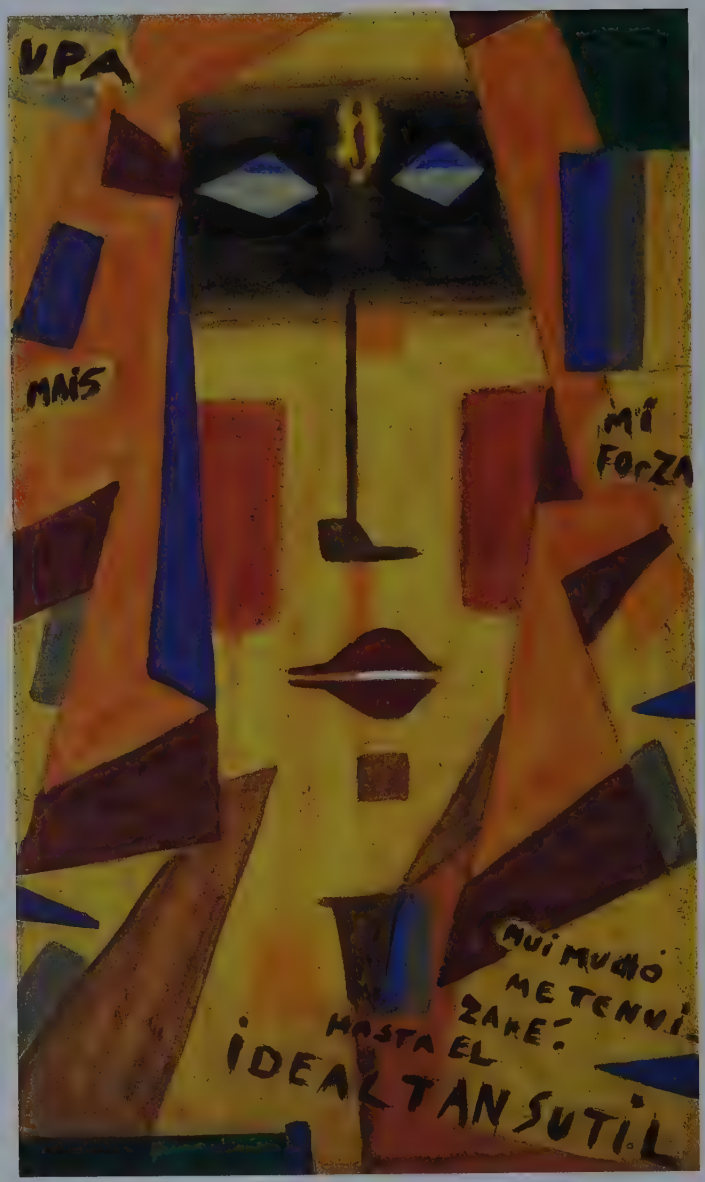
42. *Steps of the Blue Yearning*, 1922, watercolor on paper, 23.5 x 10 cm. Pan Klub Foundation.

43. *I'll be Able to*, 1922,
watercolor on paper, 10 x 23.3 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



44. *Apoyo moral doi*
(I Give Moral Support), 1922,
watercolor on paper, 10 x 23.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

45. *Dios estaki*
(God Ishere), 1922,
watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 23 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.



46. *Upa mais mi forza*
(Go up More, my Strenght), 1922,
watercolor on paper, 21 x 12 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

47. *Man and Dragon,* 1922,
watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 24.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

48. *The Four,* 1922,
watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 24.5 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

49. *Man*
(original title in English), 1922,
watercolor on paper, 12 x 12 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

50. *Chicken*, 1922
watercolor on paper, 11 x 25.7 cm.
Private collection.

51. *Fluctuate Serpent Ship*, 1922,
watercolor on paper, 17 x 29.5cm.
Private collection.

52. *You and I*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 32 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

53. *Move Forward,* 1923,
watercolor on paper, 10.5 x 10.7 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

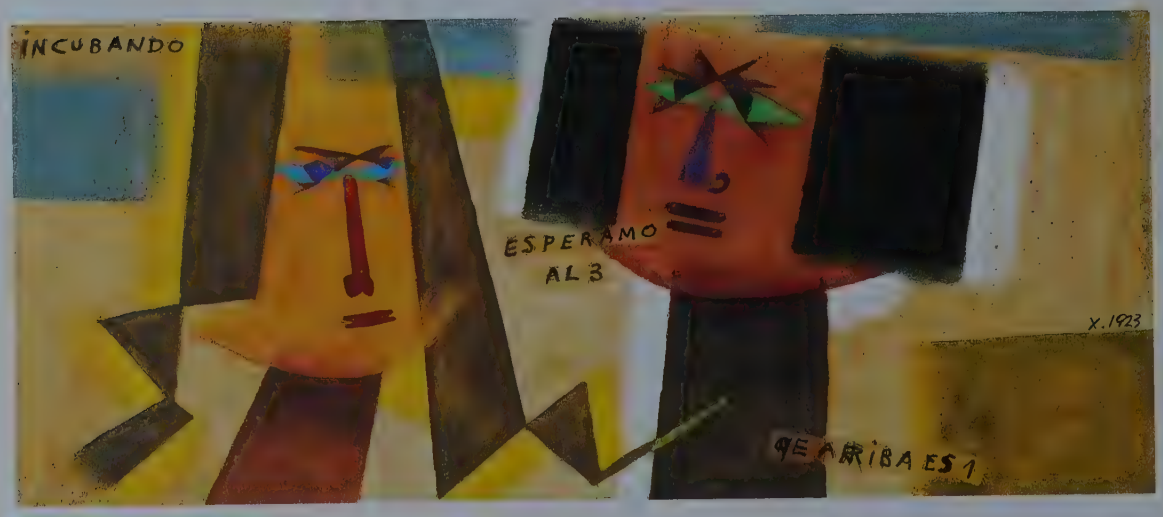
54. *Face*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 10.7 x 10.7 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

55. *Almost a Flight*, 1923
watercolor on paper, 21 x 7.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

56. *Magician*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 15 x 21 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

57. *A Mestizo Woman*,1923,
watercolor on paper, 15 x 12 cm.
Private collection.

58. *Chi máscara*
("Chi" Mask), 1923,
watercolor on paper, 17.5 x 22 cm.
Private collection.



59. *Incubando esperamo…*
(Incubating We Wait), 1923,
watercolor on paper, 11 x 25 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

60. *She-Chief Honor*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 28 x 26 cm.
Private collection.

61. *Saint P*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

62. *Ion Ribbons*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 25.5 x 25.5 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

63. *Do Judge*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 32 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

64. *America*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 23 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

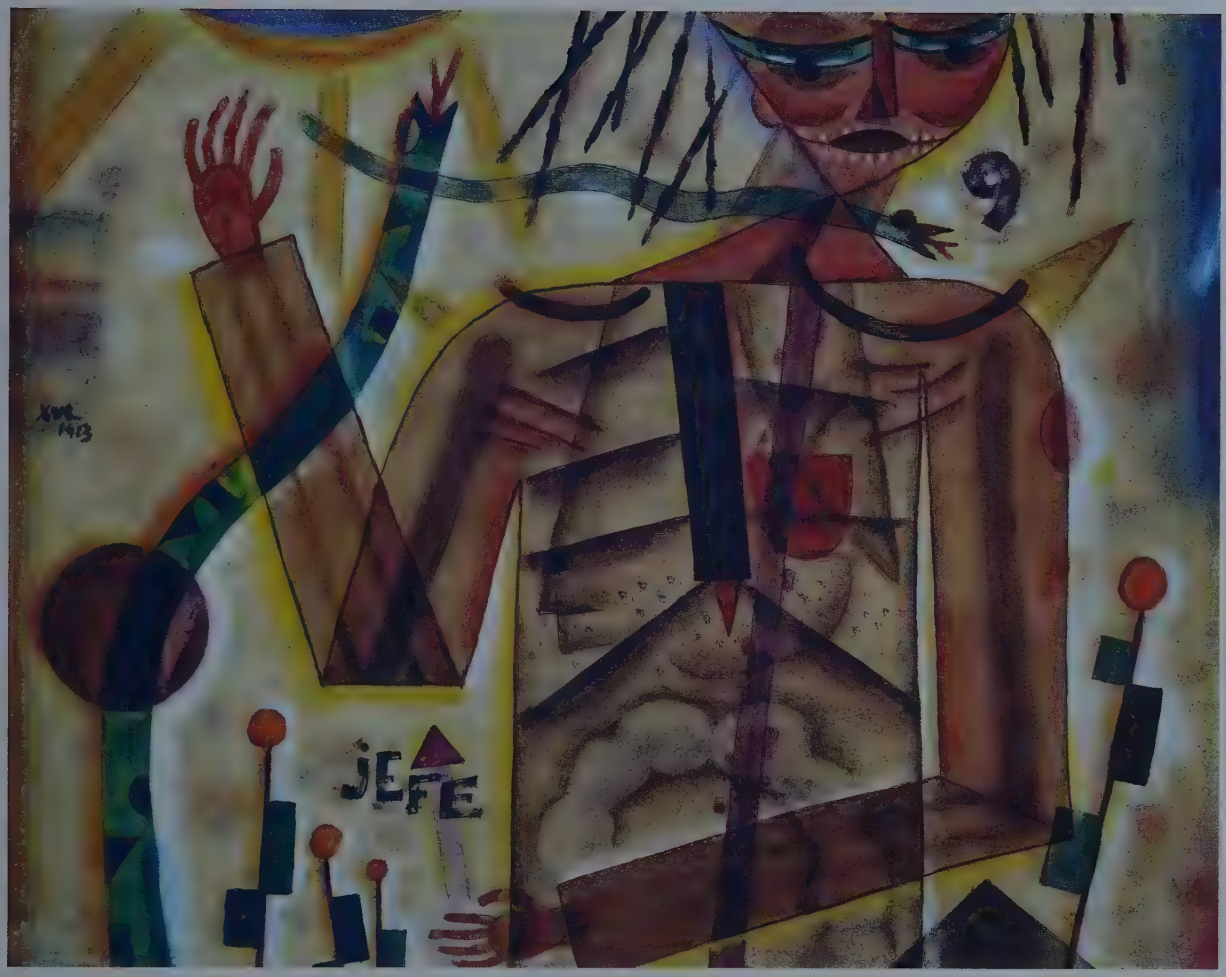
65. *Drago San Jorge* (Dragon Saint George), 1923,
watercolor on paper, 14 x 19.5 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

66. *Solar Nuncio*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 20.5 x 12 cm.
Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Goodman collection.

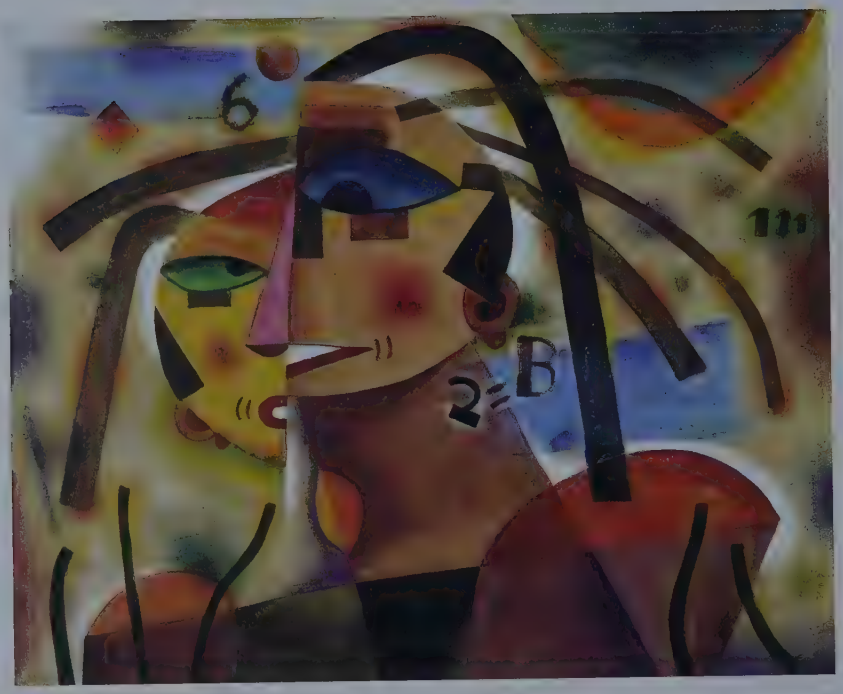
67. *She-Chief*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 26 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

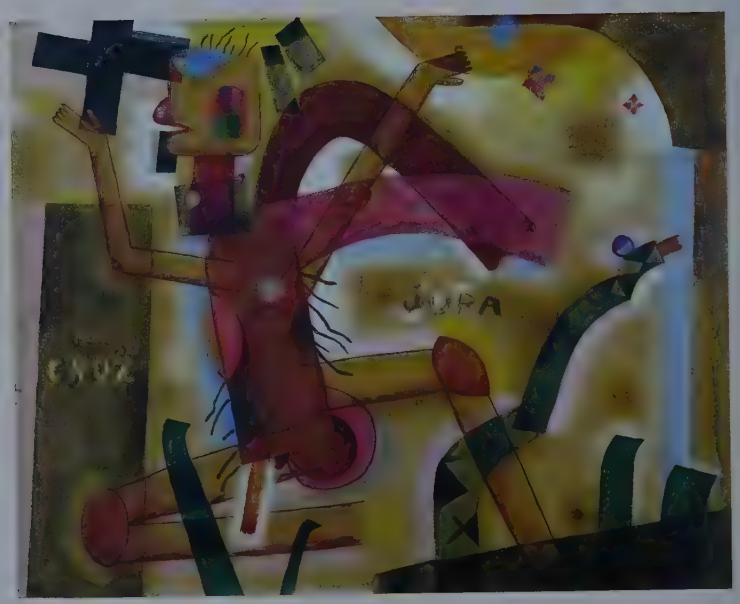
68. *Tlaloc, God of the Rain*, 1923, watercolor on paper, 26 x 32 cm. Private collection

69. *Hipnotismo (Quero sí sí sí hipnotismo no no)*
[Hypnotism – I Want Yes Yes Yes Hypnotism No No], 1923
watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 27.3 x 33.3 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.



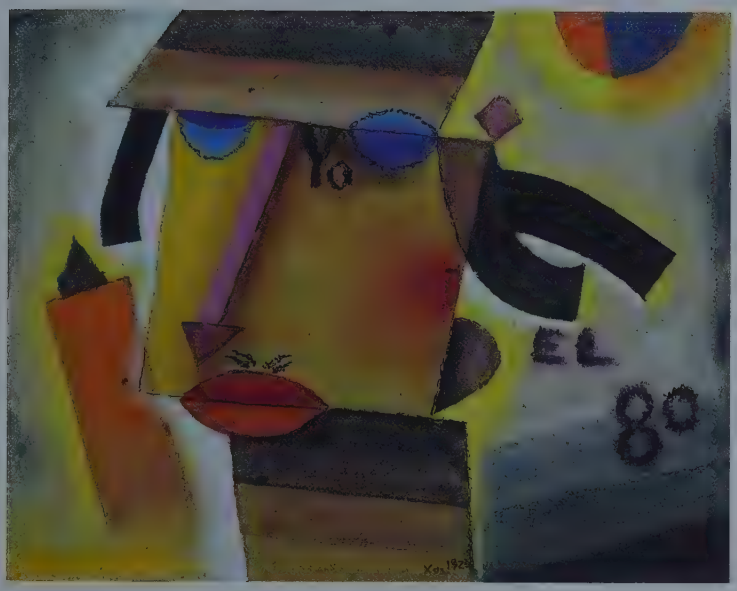
70. *Chief of Serpents*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 27.3 x 3e cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.





71. *Couple*, 1923,
watercolor on paper mounted on cardboard, 27.7 x 33.9 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.

72. *By His Cross He Swears*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 25.8 x 32.2cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.



73. *Me the 80*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, 22 x 25.2 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.

74. *Four Mestizo Women*, 1923,
watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 25.8 x 32.1 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.

75. *Despareja o Lungo y petiso* (Mismatch or Tall and Shortie), 1924, watercolor on paper, mounted on cardboard 21 x 25.6 cm. MALBA. Costantini collection.

76. *Two Couples*, 1924,
watercolor on paper, 27.5 x 35 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

77. *The Tunnel*, 1924,
watercolor on paper, 31.5 x 48 cm.
Private collection.

78. *Three*, 1924,
watercolor on paper, 28 x 26.5 cm.
Private collection.

79. *Musical,* 1924,
watercolor on paper, 23.5 x 27 cm.
Private collection.

80. *Mask with Cross*, 1924,
watercolor on paper, 17 x 22.5 cm.
Private collection.

81. *Lion*, 1924,
watercolor and collage on cardboard, 21.5 x 26.87 cm.
Private collection.

82. *Ribbons*, 1924,
watercolor on paper, 27.7 x 33.9 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.

83. *Round Dance*, 1925,
watercolor on paper mounted on cardboard, 25 x 31 cm.
MALBA. Costantini collection.

84. *Proa*, Avant-garde Review, 1925
mixed technique on paper, 30.2 x 22.2 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation collection.

85. *Pagoda*, 1925,
watercolor on paper, 28 x 37 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

86. *Country*, 1925,
watercolor on paper, 14 x 19.5 cm.
Private collection.

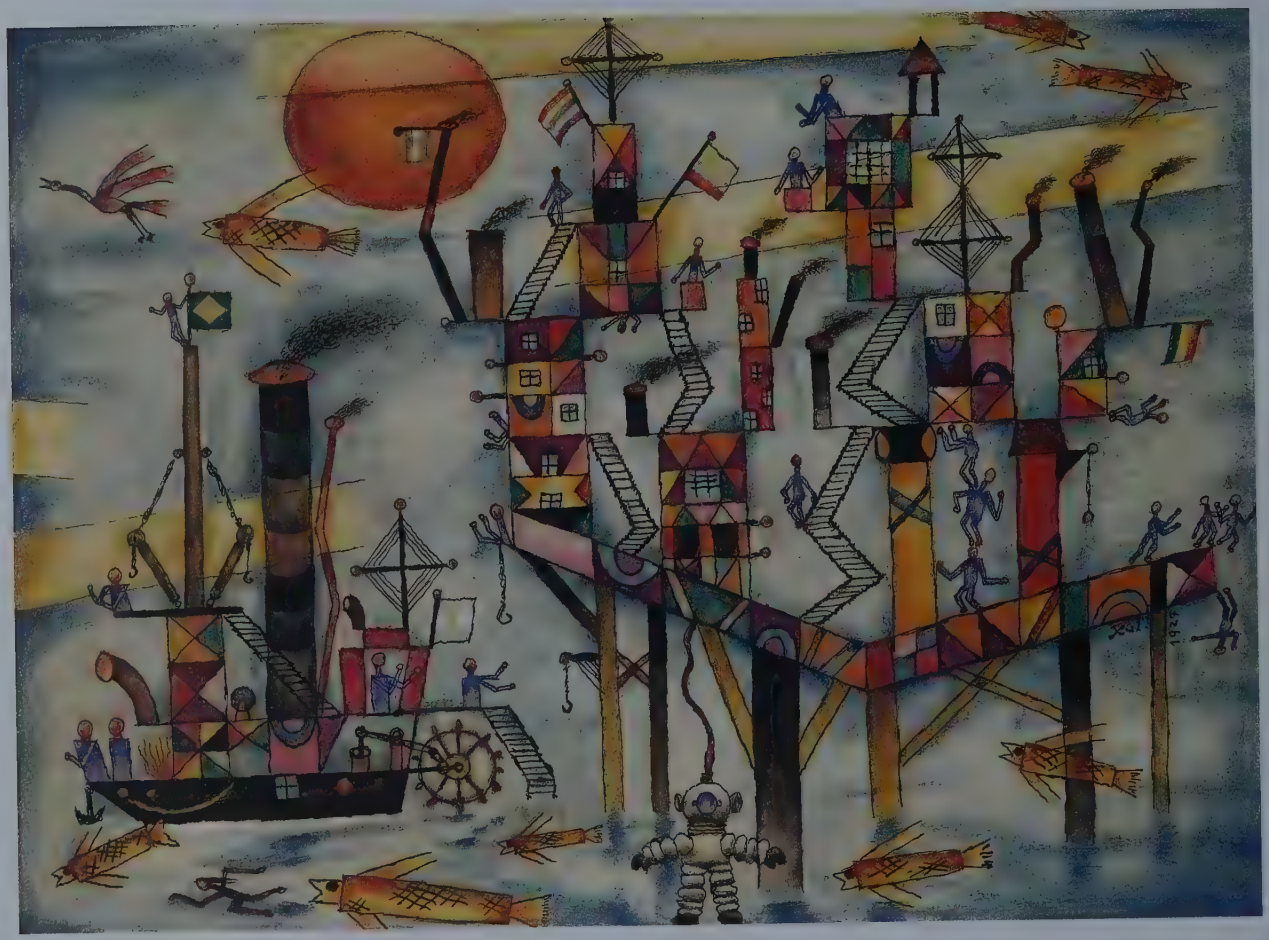
87. *Ways*, 1925
watercolor on paper, 31 x 47 cm.
Private collection.

88. *Twelve Stairs,* 1925,
watercolor on paper, 27.5 x 37 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

89. *Bau* (Architecture), 1926, watercolor on paper, 19 x 24 cm. Pan Klub Foundation.

90. *Milky Rain*, 1926,
watercolor on paper, 15 x 21 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

91. *Bau* (Architecture), 1926
watercolor on paper, 15.6 x 20.6 cm.
Private collection.



92. *Blue Port*, 1927,
watercolor on paper, 28 x 37 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

93. *Drago* (Dragon), 1927,
watercolor on paper, 25.5 x 32 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

94. *Esfinge con admizule*
(Sphinx with "admizule"), 1927
mixed technique on paper, 28 x 37 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

95. *Victoria (Ocampo)*, 1927,
watercolor on paper, 16 x 21 cm.
Diane and Bruce Halle collection. (EE.UU.)

96. *Umbra*
(Shadow), 1929,
oil on cardboard, 22.5 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

97. *B.A.*, 1929
watercolor and gouache on paper, 30 x 45 cm.
Private collection.

98. *Soto con trío* (Countryside with Trio), 1930, watercolor on paper, 31.5 x 47 cm. Xul Solar Museum.

99. *King*, 1931,
watercolor on paper, 38.5 x 58.8 cm.
Diane and Bruce Halle collection. (EE.UU.)

100. *Wood and Yogi,* 1931,
watercolor on paper, 32 x 47 cm.
Private collection.

101. *Palacio Almi*
(Souls Palace), 1932
watercolor on paper, 40 x 55 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

102. *Man sierpe bau y lunas*
(Serpent Man Architecture and Moons), 1932,
gouache on paper, 40 x 55 cm.
Private collection.

103. *Landscape*, 1933,
gouache on paper, 40 x 56.3 cm.
Private collection.

104. *Vision at End of Road*, 1934, watercolor on paper, 32 x 47 cm. Private collection.

105. *Bugs*, 1935,
greasy pencil on paper, 16 x 21.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

106. *Bugs*, 1935,
greasy pencil on paper, 17.5 x 2e cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

107. *Serpents and Birds*, 1935
greasy pencil on paper, 17 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

108. *Bugs and Plants*, 1935,
greasy pencil on paper, 17.5 x 2e cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

109. *Vuel Villa* (Fly Town), 1936,
watercolor on paper, 34 x 40 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

110. *Ciudá Lagui*
(Lakes City), 1939,
watercolor on paper, 37.5 x 52 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

111. *Seascape*, 1939
gouache on paper, 40 x 55.5 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

112. *Fjord*, 1943
gouache on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

113. *Walls*, 1944,
gouache on paper, 35 x 40 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

114. *Deep Valley*, 1944,
gouache on paper mounted on cardboard, 40 x 55.5 cm.
Private collection.

115. *Walls and Stairs*, 1944,
gouache on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Rubbers Gallery collection.

116. *Walls and Stairs*, 1944,
gouache on paper, 34 x 48.5 cm.
Private collection.

117. *Almost Plants,* 1946,
gouache on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Private collection.

118. *Contrapunto de montes con yara*
(Counterpoint of Hills with "Yara"), 1948,
watercolor on paper, 34 x 40 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

119. *Points counterpoint,* 1948
watercolor on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Private collection.

120. *Temple,* 1949,
watercolor on paper, 34 x 40 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

121. *Plurentes*
(Weepers), 1949,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 33 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

122. *Trece San Mástiles*
(Thirteen Saint Masts), 1949
watercolor on paper, 50 x 70 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

123. *País rojo teti*
(Country "Teti" Red), 1949,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

124. *Rua ruini*
(Road of Ruins), 1949,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

125. *Clean Ruins*, 1949,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Private collection.

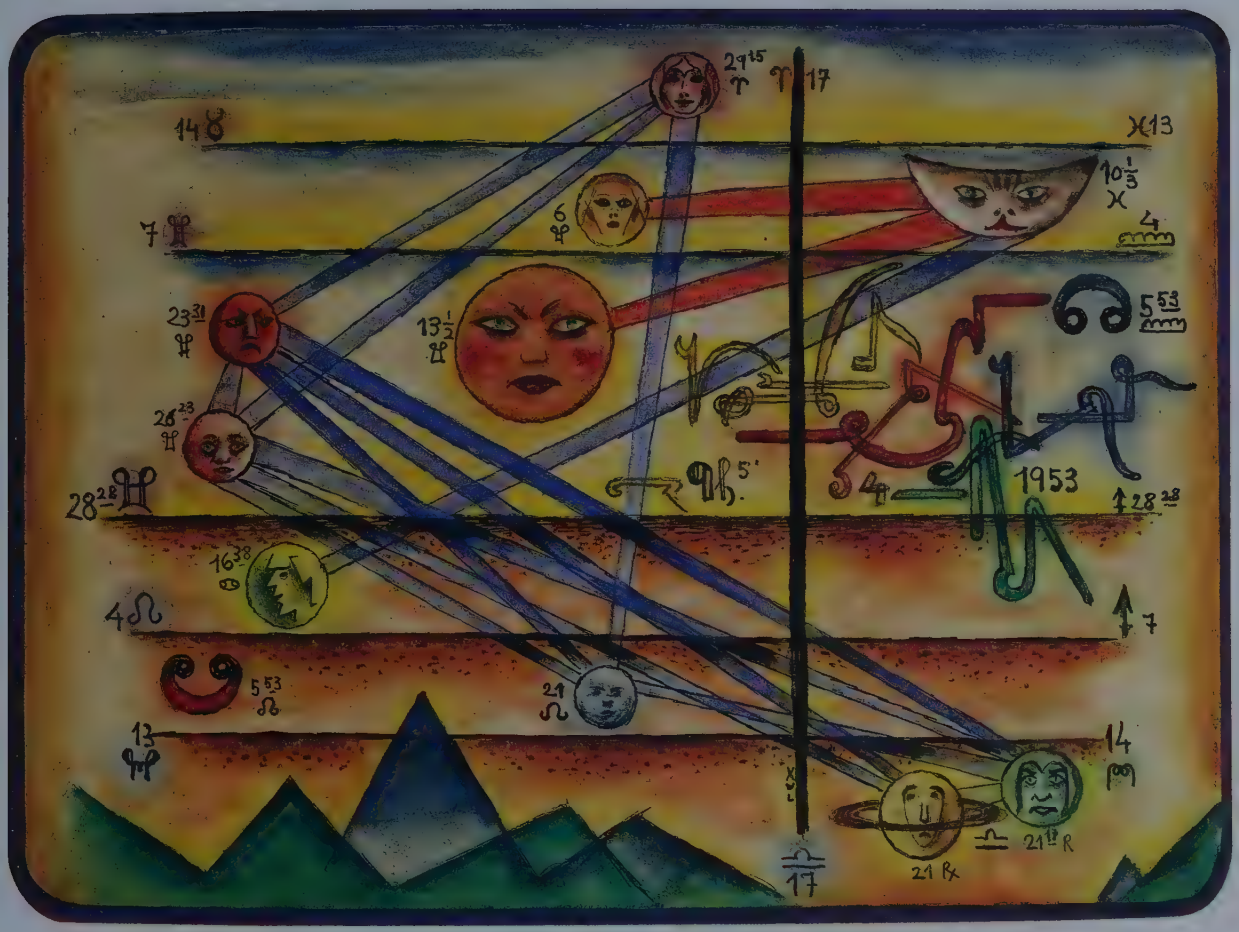
126. *Montiondas con cruz*
(Mountwaves with Cross), 1949,
watercolor on paper, 34 x 48 cm.
Private collection.

127. *Ruins*, 1950,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 50 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

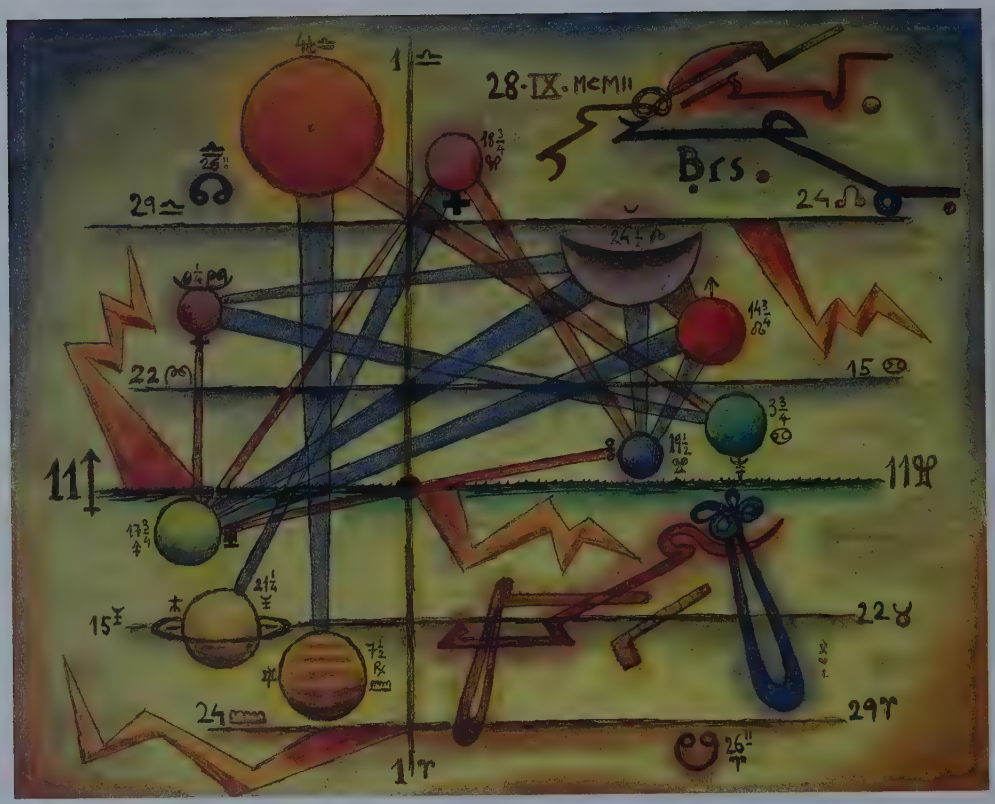
128. *Multiple portrait*, 1951,
mixed technique on paper, 40 x 33.5 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

129. *Horoscope Portrait of Miguel Ángel Asturias*, 1952,
gouache on paper, 49.5 x 34 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

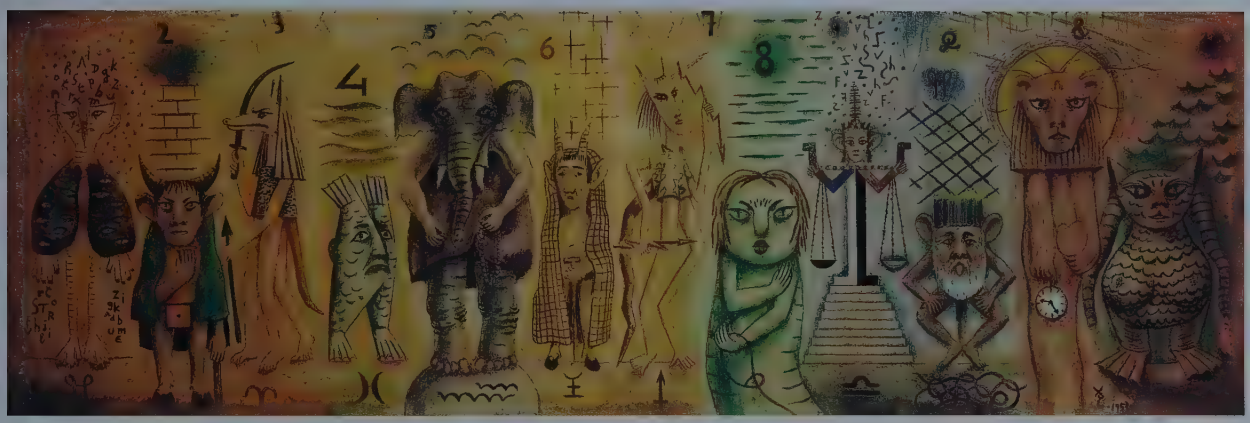
130. *Coecos Pan Tree*
(Correspondence Pan Tree), 1953,
watercolor on paper, 35.2 x 23.8 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



131. *Xul Solar's Horoscope*, 1953,
mixed technique on paper, 34 x 40 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



132. *Lita's Horoscope*, 1953,
mixed technique on paper, 27 x 33 cm.
Private collection.



133. *Zodiac*, 1953,
watercolor on paper, 34 x 99 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

134. *Even Signs of the Zodiac*, 1953, watercolor on paper, 45 x 58 cm. Xul Solar Museum.

135. *Odd Signs of the Zodiac*, 1953, watercolor on paper, 45 x 58 cm. Xul Solar Museum.

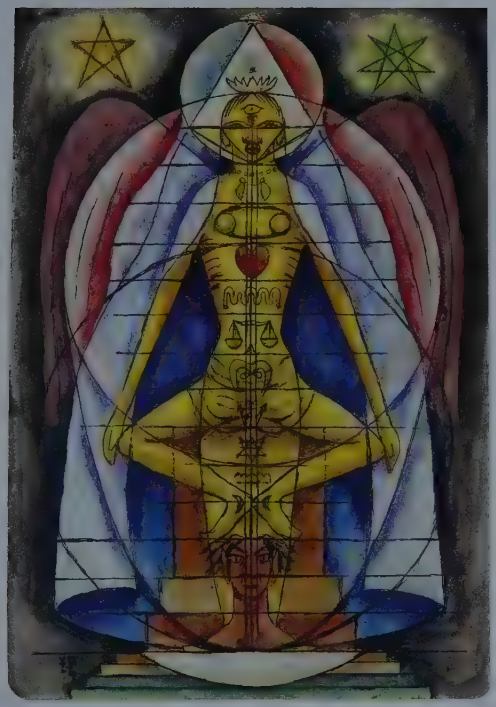
136. *I Ching Development*, 1953, gouache on paper, 35 x 50 cm. Xul Solar Museum.

137. *Planetary Masks,* 1953,
watercolor on paper, 45 x 58 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

138. *Mount with Stairs,* 1953,
watercolor on paper, 22.3 x 29.3 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

139. *Mary's Church*, 1954,
watercolor on paper, 33.3 x 24.2 cm.
Private collection.

140. *Mary's Church*, 1954,
watercolor on paper, 33.3 x 24.2 cm.
Private collection.



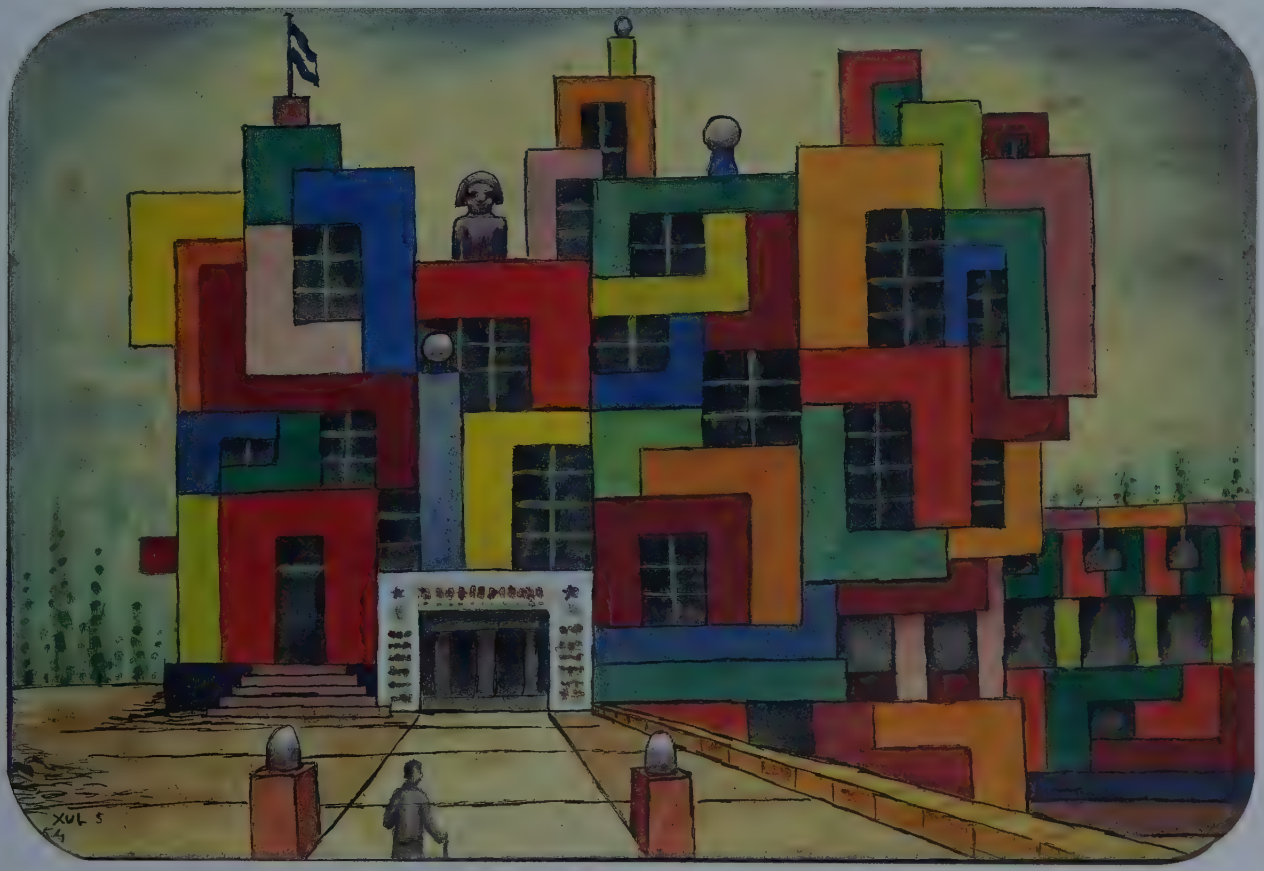
141. *Pan Tree*
(original title in English), 1954,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 24.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

142. *Pan altar mundi*
(Universal Altar of the World), 1954,
wood and watercolor, 65 x 46 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

143. *Symbols*, 1954,
oil on cardboard, 50 x 30 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

144. *Coecos fachada* (Correspondence Façade), 1954, watercolor on paper, 24.2 x 34.4, mounting 31.8 x 41.6 cm. Pan Klub Foundation.

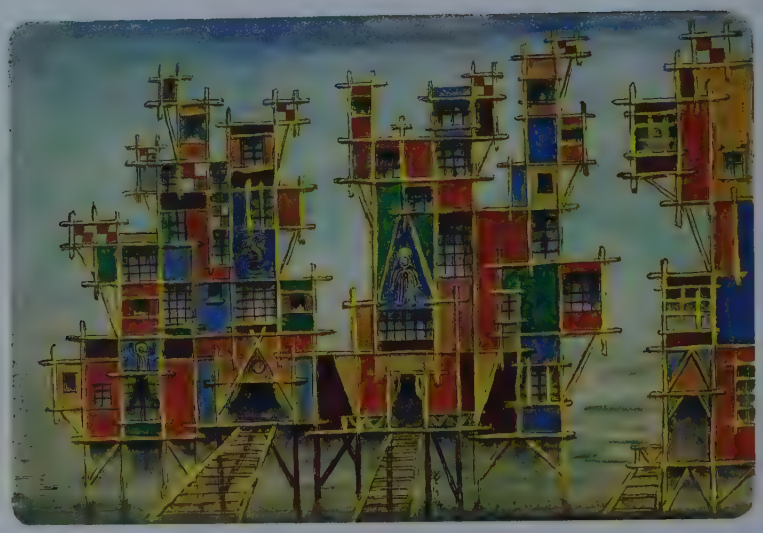
145. *Delta Façade Project*, 1954,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 36 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



146. *Façade Project for a City*, 1954
watercolor on paper, 25.5 x 36.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

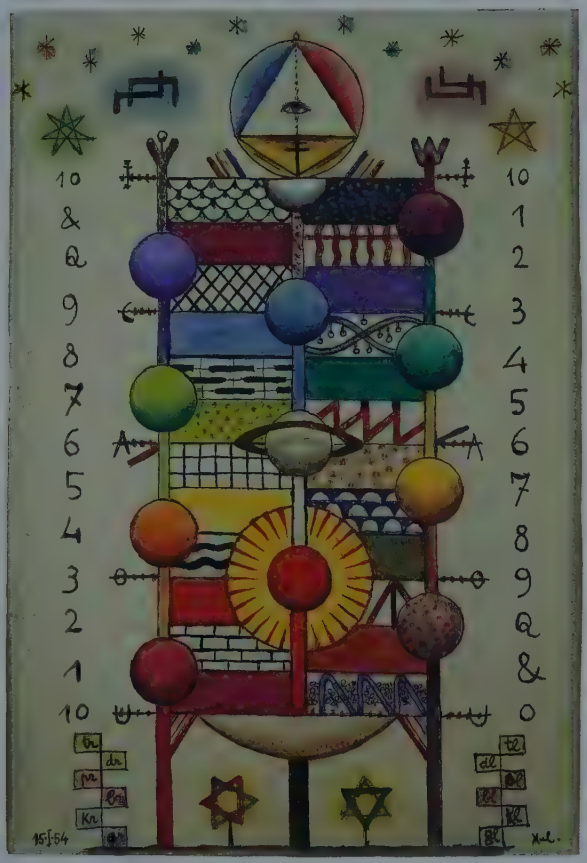
146. *Façade Project for a City*, 1954
watercolor on paper, 25.5 x 36.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

148. *Proyecto Pan Klú Delta*
(Delta Pan Club Project), 1954,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 36 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



149. *Saint Lar Project, Tigre,* 1954,
watercolor on paper, 24.5 x 35.4 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

150. *Delta Façade Project,* 1954,
watercolor on paper, 26 x 36 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.



151. *Pan Tree* (original title in English), 1954,
watercolor on paper, 35 x 23.5 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

152. *Regent Planet*, 1954,
watercolor on paper, 34.5 x 24 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

153. *Plaza (I)*, 1955,
watercolor on paper, 17 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

154. *Plaza (II)*, 1955,
ink and watercolor on paper, 16.2 x 22.2 cm.
Private collection.

155. Glor Santa María Madre de Dios,
(Glory Saint Mary Mother of God), 1959,
gouache on paper, 28 x 38 cm.
Private collection.

156. *Civic Text*, 1960,
gouache on paper, 48 x 56 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

157. *Bodi satva*, 1960,
gouache on paper, 16.5 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

158. *Saint Mary*, 1960,
gouache on paper, 17.5 x 23 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

159. *Mwi waite yu*
(Me-We Wait You), 1961,
gouache on paper, 23 x 30.2 cm.
Private collection.

160. *Script*, 1961,
gouache on paper, 16.5 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

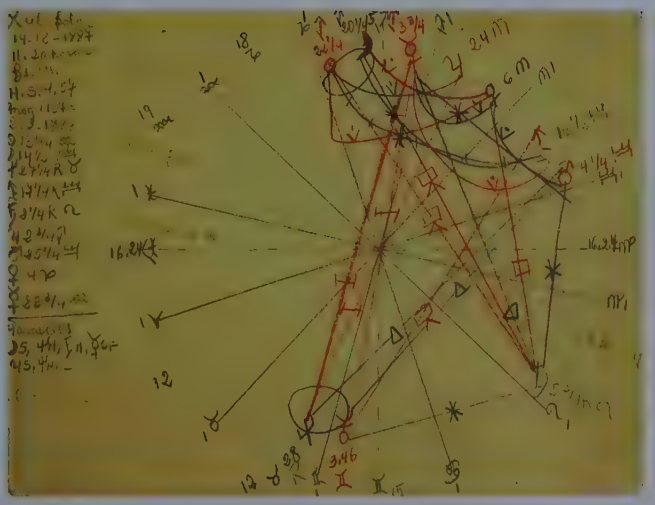
161. *Mwi worke for melior mundo*
(I-We Work for a Better World), 1962
gouache on paper, 38 x 27.8 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

162. *Xamine todo*
(Examine everything), 1962,
watercolor on paper, 17 x 22 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

163. *Mwi worke for teo reino*
(Me-We Work for the Kingdom of God), 1962,
watercolor on paper, 17.5 x 23 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

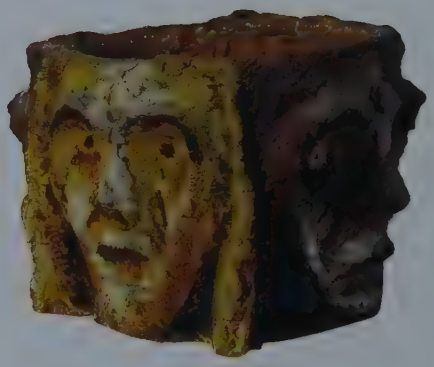
164. *Piu mui worke*
(Mote very work), 1962,
gouache on paper, 21.5 x 34 cm.
Pan Klub Foundation.

165. *Pan Klub's Astral Chart* (n.d.),
color pencils on cardboard, 14.5 x 11 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.



166. *Xul Solar's Astral Chart* (n.d.),
color pencils on cardboard, 14.5 x 11 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

167. *Cross* (n.d.),
wood/ watercolor on paper, 62 x 32.5 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.



168. *Pan Altar*
[Universal Altar] (n.d.),
wood/ watercolor on paper, 78 x 46 cm.
Xul Solar Museum.

169. *Vase* (n.d.),
papier machée, 9 x 15 x 13 cm.
Xul Solar Museum

Francisco Jarauta

The Visionary Space of Xul Solar

It is difficult to separate oneself from the profound and perturbing fascination that occurs when one returns to the work of Xul Solar and that infinite gallery of signs, landscapes, and sceneries that he created. Some are imaginary, others visionary, but each one is always aflame with the light and fire of the viewer who sees and invents them for himself. And now, just as on that first occasion when I had the opportunity to meet him in 1974, the same question, the same problem arises: where did these paintings originate? How were they imagined, invented, painted? In what space, with what terror, from what strange, remote vision were they conceived? And now as then, different moments meet, and the idea of a disturbing interpretation comes over me, one that had already illuminated my relationship with Xul Solar back then when we first met. I was reading then without a pause, as if carried along by the same pain that had inspired them, the *Songs of Innocence*, published by Blake in 1789, followed by the *Songs of Experience* in 1794. I cannot look at Xul Solar's work today without feeling the presence of the voice of those poems once again. Each poem proclaimed a limit and a transfiguration. One after another, the poems announced a primal destruction that countered the innocence of new forms of experience. Not only was that innocence converted into burnt earth, but the flames lighted the vision of other orders which Blake transferred to the agonizing, extreme gesticulations of his allegories. These were barely altered by the ideal of the grand forms of the circle, the whirlpool, the spiral, by which space is ordered, thus demonstrating the tension of a world whose transparence had turned opaque. That tension, which Blake described at the height of the Age of Enlightenment, forced a return to an earlier time, to a supposedly profound origin in which nature once again engendered the possibilities, an order of things without figures, blurred even to the vision. It is an order that is beyond all neo-classical dreams, one that is not called Greece, nor Antiquity, but rather Chaos, Genesis or Paradise. It is there that we can find the light that illuminates the ages, the light that gives origin to the hazardous play of creatures. It is curious to observe how Blake himself, obsessed with the birth of light, became dark, not deliberately, but from the fear that comes with experience, from a knowledge of limits, errors, and violence. It is a space that only a deviant or visionary outlook could embrace, one as deviant, or better stated, as deluded as the look in the eyes of the figure of Minerva at the Baptistery in Florence. Leon Battista Alberti once described her, with eyes so wide-open that they could perceive the future and, afterwards, could never return to their natural disposition, remaining forever anchored in an excess of vision. This is, of course, a vision that later will recognize as its world that of the mythical Momus of Alberti, endowed with the widest variety of knowledge and the most unusual abilities, an analogy that so closely resembles the extraordinary figure of Xul Solar.

These Blakian references, as well as others, can be interpreted as a personal reference when finding certain clues to reading the work of Xul. One must take into account, of course, that his voyage as an artist was an immensely varied one, charged with knowledge and disciplines, and above all, with an infinite curiosity. It was Borges who presented him as a true "cosmopolitan", that term used by the Stoics to define the strange place of belonging of one who crosses frontiers, tongues and dreams in his voyage. Here we refer to a trip that takes us from our native place to transform us into inhabitants of a new territory composed of infinite fragments and memories, an archipelago of permanent and endless drifting. Xul described himself in two brief autobiographical notes, which were in a way an alchemic portrait, as a "master of a writing that no one can read yet." These writings contain the keys to so much other wisdom and to so many techniques. They form the base of a kind of alphabet that could be used to think and write, build and invent. "Painter, scribbler, and

little else. Duodecimal and catrolitic (ca: cabalistic, tro: astrologer, li: liberal, co: coistic or cooperator). Recreator – a non-inventor and world champion of 'pan-chess' (pan: all-inclusive) and other serious games that no one plays; father of a 'pan-language' that aims at perfection, which almost no one speaks..." His is an identity built out of an imaginary exterior. As a main drive, it traverses not only his biography –that brief arena in which time draws its shadow– but, and primarily, his long adventure as an artist and a creator.

Some day in the future, we will need a more detailed and better-documented reconstruction of his years in Europe. The trip, that began in 1912 and lasted until his return to Buenos Aires in July 1924, became a true voyage of initiation for him. "I have been preparing myself to go to Europe with enough money to cover a month's expenses, and I have been alternating between hope, the desire to struggle, to unwind, and complete despair. *Un matin nous partons, le cerveau plein de flamme, le coeur gros de rancune et de désir amers.*" (One morning we depart, the brain aflame, the heart heavy with resentment and bitter desire.) He wrote this in January 1912 when the anchors had been weighed and all that was missing was that the **England Carrier** pointed its prow toward the Old Continent. The transatlantic of his dreams left Buenos Aires on April 5, carrying an exceptional passenger and his over-anxious curiosity. The stations of the trip sped by: London, Paris, Milan, Turin. The goal was to reach Zoagli, a place he had heard so much about, the original home of the Solari family.

The letters, jottings, his travel notes are filled with secrets, with references to constant discoveries, that thick cobweb into which the formal decisions of this "painter, scribbler and little else", that Xul Solar purported to be, are woven. Were we to register the decisive moments of those years, we would refer to the particular way that Xul appropriated and carried out his dialogue with European art of the early twentieth century, an art marked by an anxious search for new languages and proposals. Borges, as well, has noted Xul's expressionistic heritage, one that he considered as a kind of spiritual and esthetic matrix in which the young Xul was formed. No one can ignore the significant role that German expressionism had in the formation of a new artistic and cultural conscience. It would suffice today to look back on all that it has signified in the final decades of the so-called *Expressionismusdebatte* to observe the determinative role that the expressionist movement played at the moment of defining the decisive positions of rupture in relation to the fin-de-siècle crisis. Beyond formal problems, we must stress its capacity to disintegrate outdated languages that naturalism, and to some extent impressionism, attempted to save. The crisis at the end of the nineteenth century demanded answers that can be found in expressionist art forms–painting, music, literature, etc. Expressionism became the laboratory par excellence for change. Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Klee... and so many others, together with Schönberg and Berg, Kubin, Kafka, or Musil... all came to take part in the complex process of a lengthy metamorphosis and transformation of an era that expired to open the way for the next.

A careful reading of the early work of Xul after he arrived in Europe permits us to recognize and identify a clear and direct expressionist heritage. Xul appropriated expressionism's two major positions. On the one hand, there was the drive to affirm a subjective dimension in the work, an interior moment that imposed warmer tones, contrasted and submitted to a highly dramatic intention. The intensities that Xul gave his painting began to attract attention from the moment the work first appeared. He imposed his inner world onto the work, with all its violence, suspending the complacency of a naturalism that had been predominant in much of the art of the second half of the nineteenth century. His denial of the supremacy of evidence, of the value of appearances, even in a

temporal register as recognized earlier by impressionism, would give way now to an almost gesticulatory affirmation of an internal sentiment, of a subjective appropriation of the formal elements. On the other hand, there is the tendency toward a progressive dissolution of formal elements, an emancipation of both color and sound in relation to painting and music. It is the process that leads expressionism to follow the path of abstraction, a path that first Kandinsky and then Klee would adapt lucidly. It was the process leading to a progressive abstraction, which would inaugurate a new phase in modern art, which permitted the destruction of those strategies that the culture of representation had previously legitimized. And as we know so well now, it was through the processes of abstraction that the first constructivist hypotheses were formulated. "Art does not reproduce the visible; it makes the world visible," Klee commented in 1920. We could consider this statement to be one of the central manifestos of those years, in that it indicates how abstraction, as a derivative of expressionism, found its own identity.

We can find an ample and generous appropriation of this thesis and the positions it contains in Xul. Without being over zealous, Xul invented a path, with certain occasional variants, that would define his pictorial language. While at times working closer to analytical positions, he ended up adopting a language more connected to the profile of the things he chose to represent, even when that was to be invalidated by the flow of dreams and the world fed by them. Finally, there was a formal and geometric reduction that approximates the most radical theses of early abstraction. And between one position and the other, his own path emerged, one that would be central to Xul's work. It included the most analytical elements of composition, as well as the more intuitive, imaginary and fantastic ones that escape the plausibility of naturalism, to enable him to lead us into the space of dreams, visions, or the surreal. Xul placed himself before a certain idealization of form, closer to certain esoteric proposals. From that position, he defended a kind of narrative contamination, so characteristic of surrealism, that allowed him to articulate the inner path with the external, the phantasmal world with that other one, so frigid and constructive.

Few of Xul's texts express the passion that accompanied these first discoveries with such intensity, such as when he bought a publication edited in Munich by Kandinsky, Macke, and Marc among others. "I bought a book, *Der Blaue Reiter*, about the advanced art of the *fauves* (beasts), futurists, and cubists. Their work frightens the bourgeois, pictures without nature, just lines and color… I don't think I really like them very much, but I am very satisfied, because I realize that I can see for myself, without the need of any external inspiration. I have been working, on the one hand, on a new tendency that will be the dominant one in the most elevated art of the future. On the other, I can now see how I will be able to stand out easily among these new artists because I have a better sense of composition and color than the majority of them." Coincidences and possible distances protected Xul from the beginning, always leaving the path open, a path that, as a painter, was reserved for him alone, to employ an expression used by Kafka in his mature years. Along this path, Xul would discover a variety of languages and writings and remain faithful, before all, to the inner need of a world that he recognized as his own and to which he sought to give a voice and an expression.

When identifying this inner world, it is necessary to take into consideration another basic component of his formation, and that is the increased attention that he dedicated to reading about the esoteric and the history of religions. H. P. Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner, together with the already classic Jakob Böhme and Emanuel Swedenborg, without forgetting the already-mentioned William

Blake, among others, constituted a world that traversed his esthetic concerns to insert themselves in his artistic work. We could call it a spiritual constellation that ranged from Lautréamont to Apollinaire, members of the French tradition. In the case of the Germans, members of the early expressionist movement asserted an equally profound influence. Complementary traditions must also be included, such as those of the German symbolists and the friends of *Die Brücke*, such as Kirschner, Heckel, and Schmidt-Rottluff, without forgetting the most emblematic figure of all of those years, Alfred Kubin. It would be an interesting exercise to trace the influences of Kubin's work on Xul himself: what affinities he felt and how he reacted before Kubin's work itself. Canetti has already noted how the shadow that was projected by Kubin's figures spread through the art of the first decades of the twentieth century. Kubin's work allowed us to understand how the occult, that portion of experience that symbolism had relegated to the space of the sublime and distant, now returned in the form of shadows that would cover an anxious and insecure world. Ernst Jünger in *Strahlungen* situated the work of Kubin in the realm of that disturbing "bunch of Oriental authors" which had been capable of describing decadence more profoundly than most others.

Kafka would evoke his demons, Georg Trakl would transit other dreams of life and death, Kubin would see the spread of the swamps and the tangled sprawl of the forests. This new horizon was adopted by many friends of Murnau, enthusiastic readers themselves, as well as by Lyonel Feininger, Max Dauthendey, and even Zweig himself, among others. For all of them, Die andere Seite, which Kubin published in 1909, appeared as the most illuminating document about an epoch in the process of undergoing profound transformations. Confronting all of this, Kubin and Xul Solar would both imagine fantastic worlds and inhabit forests that could be places of passage and initiation, something like a Zwischenwelt, a world of "in-between", without permanency, suspended between death and possibility, where only the possible is real.

Perhaps it is these very topical affinities that would lead Xul in such a special way to the work of Paul Klee. The details of this relationship have been thoroughly analyzed with no one being able to determine the real circumstances of a now highly improbable hypothetical meeting. On the contrary, it has become increasingly more fascinating to review the affinities in the works of both artists, just as the recent exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires attemped to do. Formed in a tradition dominated by great German graphic artists like Max Klinger, Alfred Kubin, or Böcklin himself, Klee discovered color at the hand of Macke during their trip to Tunisia. To that, he was to add the problems of composition posed and theorized by Kandinsky in the second decade of the twentieth century. It is Klee, however, who, taking the disposition of elements in the composition as a starting-point, combined them with those other elements that the intuition provides through varied forms of experience.

"Intuition," Klee has said, "is a guide, even in the twilight and the densest forest." This defense of intuition opened a space beyond all formal systems in Klee that, at times, naturalism, and on other occasions, abstraction, had imposed upon art. On the one hand, the inadequacy of any proper language to name the 'real' had been affirmed. It no longer depended on the evidence of its appearance, but rather on a supposed and structured complexity. On the other hand, this new 'realness' did not reveal itself, but rather remained hidden. If the objective of art is "to make the world visible", this proposition became the difficulty to which to respond through the construction of a new language, one that would take responsibility for both the linguistic insufficiency of representation, as well as new complexities that the real presented. An example of this search for a

new language could be found in the process in which the formal continuity of Kandinsky's compositions were complicated structurally by the symbolic space that the experience of the real provided. Painting would no longer be pure in and of itself, no longer absolutely autonomous, but rather would be viewed as vestiges that reflect the interaction between subject and object, understandable through the assumptions already indicated.

Klee was the one to explore this new territory most rigorously. What remained is the constructive-finite character of all representation of the real. The form, in effect, by which we recognize the real is not that perfect and exhaustive one of the intuition, of the essence, but rather that of the image, of symbolism, of the signs with which we build our representation. When facing the mathematical ideal of abstraction, Klee reclaimed a conception of form that is shaped as composition, as open construction, in which the orders of movement, of potency, of affirmation/negation of the real appeared. This Lieibnizian line of thought as applied by Klee led to the exclusion of any "sole" abstract form, on finding in it an idealization that did away with this more immediate aspect of the experience. Pierre Boulez was one of the first to observe the importance of the idea of polyphony in Klee's work, precisely in order to express the simultaneity of possible lines that in crisscrossing defined the language of his pictures. Klee showed how the theory of figuration should be understood as open and free, as material that is available and permits us to narrate the vicissitudes of life, of all that escapes the law of abstract form. Klee would defend an art derived from thought as a composition of the other, in which tensions and opposites, time and rest, nature and life meet. In his drawings, infinite graphic variations are suspended on chromatic surfaces, separating the order of the events. For Klee, there is no need for any pre-established construction. All forms are thought out in hypothetical terms, as variations on a story or a situation, without premeditation, where in reflecting on things, on their slow or reckless course, their spasms or delights, they remain anchored and invoked. This methodology is as true for painting as it is for poetry, Klee would say, attracted more and more by the magic of the graphic field. "Let yourself be carried toward that animated ocean by great rivers or by streams filled with spells, like the aphorisms of the graphic field with their multiple ramifications," Klee wrote in 1920, the same year that the Hans Glotz Gallery in Munich offered him an important exhibition.

Michael Baumgartner has recently studied the cultural undercurrents present in the affinities between Xul and Klee, showing coincidences in their reading habits and the books in each of their libraries between 1910 and 1920. Another point to consider is the important presence of publications referring to the work of Klee in the list of 227 books that Xul declared at the German customs office on his return to Buenos Aires. This demonstration of devotion can be explained by the profound spiritual coincidences that led Xul and Klee to move "in the same direction". Emilio Pettoruti was to write that phrase a number of years later on recalling his own visit to Hans Goltz's gallery and bookstore in 1921. This visit could have provided Pettoruti the opportunity to meet Paul Klee. Back in Buenos Aires, Xul declared, "I am more *criollo* than ever." The contrasts became more pronounced. Borges was to recall those years with generosity of memory. The first works and interventions –the exhibition of Pettoruti at the Witcomb Gallery on Florida St., the article that Xul dedicated to the show in the September/October issue of *Martín Fierro*– opened an ample controversy that marked the appearance of the first Argentine artistic avant-garde. Xul was now installed, with his paintings, his travel notebooks, and his library, which was so admired by Borges. His aim now would be to orient his work in a direction that would clarify how influences from his

years in Europe had defined his point of view as a modern artist.

It is there that once again symmetries and affinities reappear. The series of *Arquitecturas* (Architectures) provides the most direct and explicit connection with the utopian proposals that arose in Europe immediately after the end of the First World War. On the one hand, we have the revival of a Tessenow in favor of the small city, built with the languages of craft. And on the other, a Bruno Taut, someone much closer to the expressionist tradition, who would find in crystal the only material capable of transmitting a breath of spirituality in those years, characterized by such great revolutionary momentum. One of the first manifestations would be Taut's creation of the *Glaäserne Kette*, a network of epistolary relationships in which a number of personalities of the epoch participated. Taut, who would sign with the pseudonym of Glas, declared his intentions openly, mixing pacifism of an international scope with formal references to the Far East: "Style not through the persecution of form, but rather through a philosophy of life, through religion... The material of brilliance: glass... The New Architecture: impracticable models, fluctuating, stars and absolute fantasy". The *Glasarchitektur* of Paul Scheerbart, published in *Der Sturm* magazine in 1914, began to speak of the spirit of these new forms for dwellings that would gradually come to attract architects like Hans Schraun and Walter Gropius. The focus was on open discussion between different artistic disciplines. The Bauhaus thus became the appropriate center for that end. It is in this context that Klee's work in his exhibition at the Bauhaus should be seen. The work was charged with spiritual tension and included the utopian aspirations that the architecture of the 1920's had included in its program. In a manner similar to certain works by Lyonel Feininger, such as *Cathedral of the Future*, done in 1919, references are made to cities with neither shape nor name, that emerge out of the cultural imagination as a kind of promise and premonition.

In light of these observations, we could analyze works like *Puerto Azul* (Blue Port) of 1927, *Otro Puerto* (Another Port) of 1929, or the more Orientalist *Pagoda* (Pagoda) of 1925. It would be immensely fascinating to put together a small exhibit of the cities that Klee and Xul painted and drew in those years. Agility, a relative temporality, movement, together with a certain festive air, convert their cities into imaginary landscapes, as in the watercolor *Palacio almi* (Souls Palace) (1932) that would have excited Klee.

The works of this period provide evidence of the path Xul himself was following, beyond any artistic debts to the years in Europe. We must emphasize the importance of his inner world, the personal way he devised to incorporate the different movements of the avant-garde. His intellectual formation, rich in curiosity and qualifications, his always alert vision, and his innovations and experiments can be found in the inner space of one who possesses a language of his own. Time and again, it would be employed to give form to a world of the 'possible', a concept that Klee felt to be one of the principal responsibilities of art.

We must also evaluate the influence of surrealism in Xul's work in a similar manner. Surrealism opened the doors to new experiences, new territories, new languages. The long journey from Rimbaud's *Une saison en Enfer* to Aragon's *Vague des rêves* took modern art by surprise, unbalancing the universal ideals of abstraction. In its place, a period of emergency appeared, the drift of which was narrated in Aragon's *Paysan de Paris* or Breton's *Nadja*, a kind of *profane illuminations* of the twentieth century, that constitute the scene in which surrealism could represent the complex structure of its phantasmagorias. But it is not all fantasy; there is also the idea of the infinite possibilities that art can imagine and invent.

It is here that the work of Xul Solar acquires a new dimension and an unquestionable actuality. If, on the one hand, we have the modern traditions to which it belongs and whose appropriation coincides with his European years; on the other hand, we cannot consider Xul's writing, his work, without taking his intellectual and spiritual world into account, the dimensions of which transcend strictly esthetic interests. Xul establishes a propitious bridge between one world and the other, converting his work into a signpost of a universe thought through with premeditation. It is a philosophic Xul who contrives and imagines a world that he then can make appear, accepting in the process that a set of lines mark the limit of an inexpressible infinity. It is in this space that the dance and the dramatization of the participants is produced, where, time and time again, the personages of the Kubian "other bank" appear as visitors. Xul's audacity is to use a form that is deliberately distant from reality when he names them. His gouaches, his watercolors, and some of his oils are resolved by an almost visionary vision of color, which allows him to accentuate the strange and distant character of the subject matter. That distance is manifested with peculiar and unrepeatable intensities. Xul knows full well that it is through language that one can express all of the materialness of the visible, of its appearance and death, of its will to precipitate itself into the abyss of time. It is the moment of the illumination or of a vision, a moment that Xul knows well. It is a moment in which all writings, tongues, games, and religions are just ciphers of that world whose opaqueness appears menacing. It is the moment when man intervenes with that strange form of invocation known as knowledge, religion, and art. It is a risky game designed to deter the chaos that can destroy us. Xul has been the inventor par excellence of numerous and original invocations.

Juan Manuel Bonet

From Xul's library

To Serge Fauchereau,
who doesn't know yet the River Plate

Morandian "homme pressé", one cannot linger at places as longer as one would wish. This Xul Solar's armchair, in Buenos Aires, at the beginning of November 1999, would have been a good place to stay much longer than what I could finally do. This armchair, the center of an important place in the world. I'm visiting Oscar Agustín Alejandro Schulz Solari's –better known as "Xul Solar"– house, in Laprida Street, Barrio Norte; I'm visiting his Panoramas' Tower, we could say, recalling another lofty magical place, on the other side of the River Plate.

Xul Solar, explorer of small worlds, of dreamt countries, of invented, phantasmagoric worlds. One, now, as an explorer of those worlds he used to explore.

Downstairs, the Museum itself, a modern building by Pablo Beitia, one of the works selected for the First Mies van der Rohe Award for Latin American Architecture, and the subject of an exhibition that could be visited in Valencia, at the IVAM, during 1999 fall. Upstairs, largely upstairs, after a vertiginously steep staircase, Xul's apartment, miraculously preserved, with its terrifying wooden mannequin, and its 1950s refrigerator, and its piano with a modified keyboard, and its badly peeled off blue walls, and its crucifix over the double bed.

At the Polish woods where I am writing the main part of these lines, I read *Adán Buenosayres* (1948), Leopoldo Marechal's mythical novel, about which Alejandro Corujeira had talked to me so much. What a lot of main characters of Argentine modern literature and art are conjured in its labyrinth; a phantasmagoric as well as vivid reconstruction of the martinfierrista years! The unmistakable Xul (Schultze, the astrologer); and also Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz ("Bernini, the shortie"); and Jacobo Fijman (Samuel Tesler, the philosopher) –the Ukrainian author of three books hard to find, among which I especially like *Molino Rojo* (Red-Mill)–; and Jorge Luis Borges (/Luis/Pereda); and his cousin Guillermo Juan Borges. And many more of those mad bohemian martinfierristas, contemplated by Marechal in the mist of memory, in that "story of the artist as exiled in his own neighborhood" (Ricardo Piglia). Xul is not precisely among those who come out off well. He is, of course, one of the characters that Marechal has managed to depict more true to the original, with his "neocriollo" (neo-Creole), his visionary nature, his piano, his science-fiction references.

I recall Borges, in his 1980 enlightening lecture at the San Telmo Foundation. (Before, in his 1968 speech, he calls Xul "/universal man", and "maybe the only cosmopolitan I have ever met").

At Xul's library –Borges once more: "I've never known a library more versatile and delectable than his"–, a library that surrounds the abovementioned armchair. At my back, *Historia universal de la infamia* (A Universal History of Iniquity), precisely by the omnipresent Borges, dedicated to Xul, and some other of his books. Among them, *El idioma de los argentinos* (The Language of the Argentines), with a marvelous binding drawn by the painter. These dedications alone might well be the subject of an essay. In one of them, corresponding to *Historia universal de la infamia* (1935), Borges sanctifies the addressee: "To Saint (or pre) Saint Xul Solar, these frugal exercises" (something his friend and accomplice Adolfo Bioy Casares would repeat in a copy of *La invención de Morel* [Morel's Invention] (1940): "To Saint Xul with all the affection and admiration of..."). *Discusión* [Discussions] (1932): "To Xul Solar, reasoner and mystic, I dedicate these modest labyrinths of mere reason". *Las Kenningar* [The Kenningar] (1933): "To Xul Solar (whose mention saves these pages) I dedicate...". *Nueva refutación del tiempo* [New Refutation of Time] (1947): "To Xul Solar, among methodical mistakes". And so forth. (In stead, *Fervor de Buenos Aires* [Buenos Aires Fever] is not dedicated). Books, much more books, as in a flood. *Les mots en liberté futuristes* [Futurist Words Set Free] (1918), a copy dedicated by Marinetti on his trip to Buenos Aires, within his sweet-sour Latin American

tournée of 1926; and *Zang Tumb Tuum* (1914); and the catalog of the Berlin futurist exhibition organized in 1912 by *Der Sturm*; and the 1925 anthology *I nuovi poeti futuristi* (The New Futurist Poets), of which I've seen another copy, in this case in Bilbao, dedicated to future Franco`s minister, José Félix de Lequerica. *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (Tiresias' Tits), by Apollinairê, with its deliciously naïve cover by Serge Férat and, by the latter himself, Le poète assassiné (The Murdered Poet). *Veinte poemas para ser leídos en el tranvía* (Twenty Poems to Read in the Tram) –in its second edition, "twenty cents tram edition", of 1925–; and *Calcomanías* (Decals) –"To Xul Solar, inquisitor of the only secret of ideas"–; and *Espantapájaros* (Scarecrows), by Oliverio Girondo, one of the greatest stars of the first Argentine modernity. *De la elegancia mientras se duerme* (On elegance while one sleeps), the French book, as *Veinte poemas...* of course, by the so peculiar Viscount of Lascano-Tegui, who dedicates it to Xul in red ink, in a spectacularly calligrammatic key. *No todo es vigilia la de los ojos abiertos* (It is Not All Vigil the One with Open Eyes) and other books by Macedonio Fernández, one of the beacons of the martinfierrista generation. *La nueva tormenta o la vida múltiple de Juan Ruteno* (The New Storm or the Multiple Life of Juan Ruteno), the first book (1935) by the abovementioned Bioy Casares, who dedicates it "To Xul, who through his neo-Creole influences all our literature, with the greatest fondness". *Voces* (Voices) by Antonio Porchia, another radical Argentine solitary, whose work is good to revisit often. *Les pas perdus* (The Lost Steps) by André Breton, with its blue cover from the Gallimard documents collection. *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes libres* (How I Have Written Some of my Books), by Raymond Roussel. *Le mystère laïc* (The Lay Mystery), the early essay by Jean Cocteau on Giorgio de Chirico. *Romancero gitano* (Gipsy Ballads), by Federico García Lorca. *Días como flechas* (Days as Arrows), by Leopoldo Marechal. *Don Segundo Sombra*, the master piece by Ricardo Güiraldes –"to the great and restless spirit of my friend Xul Solar, I dedicate this book on earthly affections". Güiraldes, present also with other titles, some of them posthumous. Dedicated "with kilograms of admiration and kilometers of affection", *Anivergral*, by Alberto Hidalgo, the Peruvian writer incorporated in the Buenos Aires avant-garde and instigator, in the heroic days, of the Royal Keller Revista Oral (Oral Review). *Línea* (Line) by the wandering Mexican Gilberto Owen, published by Alfonso Reyes as the fifth volume of his "Cuadernos del Plata" collection. *Giornale di bordo* (Logbook), by Ardengo Soffici. *Anillos* (Rings), by Pablo Neruda and Tomás Lago. *Hampa afro-cubana* (Afro-Cuban Underworld) by Fernando Ortiz. The so-well-known *Expressionismus* (Expressionism) by Hermann Bahr. *Terremotos líricos y otros temblores* (Lyric Earthquakes and Other Tremors) –a title which I find typical of a period, and fabulous, by Soler Darás. By Anton Giulio Bragablia, *El Nuevo teatro argentino* (The New Argentine Theater), 1930, with it greenish– black cover by Pettoruti (and I remember those so genuine words by Xul: "I'm the director of a theater without performances").

Américo Castro's essay on the River Plate linguistic peculiarity. *La tradición del hombre abstracto* (The Tradition of the Abstract Man), by Torres García. *Crucero* (Cruise), by the Mexican poet and diplomat Genaro Estada, with its lovely lithographic illustrations by the Spanish painter Gabriel García Maroto, by then in the country of the Revolution. *Vers une architecture* (Towards an Architecture) by Le Corbusier. Prometeo's *Greguerías* by a pre-Buenos Aires Ramón Gómez de la Serna, with a dazzling chess-board cover, and *Disparates* (Nonsense) by Calpe. *El casamiento* (The Marriage) by Witold Gombrowicz, published in Spanish in 1948 Buenos Aires.

Monographs on Paul Klee, Kandinsky, Mario Sironi, Zadkine, Lipchitz, Marcoussis, José Guadalupe Posada, José Clemente Orozco, Pettoruti, Luis Seoane, the Chilenized Cuban Mario Carreño, the

always "*energetic*" and jazzlike Stuart Davis... Madí publications. A book by the picturesque Baroness Hilda Rebay, first director of the Guggenheim Museum. *Gaspard de la nuit* (Gaspard of the Night), the immortal work by Aloysius Bertrand, which gave birth to the era of the poem in prose, so admired by Bergamín. *Un bárbaro en Asia* (A Barbarian in Asia), 1941, by Henri Michaux, translated by Borges.

Books by Sade, Julio Verne – *La isla de hélice* (The Propeller Island), that certainly "sounds" very much like Xul-, Jules Laforgue, Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Remy de Gourmont, Georges Rodenbach, Emile Verhaeren, Francis Jammes, Emmanuel Signoret, Saint Pol Roux, Gustave Kahn, Maurice Barrès, Proust, the monarchic León Daudet, Paul Fort, Paul Valéry, Valery Larbaud, Léon-Paul Fargue, Paul Morand, Blaise Cendrars, Max Jacob, Pierre Reverdy, André Salmon, Pierre Mac Orlan, Drieu La Rochelle, Louis Aragon.

A rebours... (Upside down...) by Huysmans. Books by William Blake –very often quoted, quite logically, with regard to the Argentine painter–, and Samuel Butler. Books by Stefan George, Albert Ehrenstein, Martin Buber, Gustav Meyrink, Christian Morgenstern –a great postsymbolist German poet, several of whose poems Xul translated of course into neo-Creole, for *Martín Fierro* no. 41–; and the expressionist Johannes R. Becher, also translated by Xul into his own language; and the unavoidable James Joyce; and the Brazilian Mário de Andrade –with his master piece, *Macunaíma*, and a dedication expressing the poet's fondness. Oswald de Andrade's *A estrella de absyntho* (Star of Absinthe), dedicated to an Oscar Creydt unknown to me; and Menotti del Picchia, the "verde-amarelo"; and *El Decamerón Negro* (The Black Decameron) by León Frobenius; and *The Magic Island* * by Seabrook; and *The Golden Bough* ** by Frazer.

More books, by Swedenborg, Jakob Böhme –attentively read, as Christopher Green reminds us, within the turn-of-the-century theosophical circles as well as among expressionist and dadaist artists; Papus, the Czar Peladan, Eliphas Levi, Rudolf Steiner –so vindicated nowadays in his artistic aspect–; Madame Blavatsky, Krishnamurti, Ouspensky, the magician Aleister Crowley –who Xul met in Paris, with whom he held a correspondence, and to whom he will dedicate, in 1961, a portrait titled *Muy mago Krowley Alistör* (Very Magician "Krowley Alistör").*** Ernest Hello, René Guénon, Gustave Le Bon, Félix Le Dantec, Ewers, Allan Kardec, Edouard Schuré, Camille Flammarion, Henri Poincaré, the Abbot Moreux, Albert Einstein, Max Planck, the Spanish Mario Roso de Luna, Otto Weininger, Simmel, Bergson, Matila C. Ghyka's *Esthétique des proportions dans la nature et dans les arts* (Esthetic of Proportions in Nature and in the Arts), which I have in an annotated edition by Maruja Mallo. There is another copy of this book at the library that belonged to Luis Castellanos, another Madrid– born constructivist of the Torres García school of the '30s. Oswald Spengler, Sigmund Freud... The trips to Tibet by Father Huc and by Alexandra David-Neel; pioneering explorers who used to delight me when I was a teenager. And so ad infinitum: Sanskrit grammars and books on everyday American life –among them, the one by Georges Duhamel, so widely read in his days–; and essays on the Jewish question, and physics treatises and Origami handbooks; and *El Apocalipsis desvelado* (The Unveiled Apocalypse); and the Talmud, and a study on the poetry of the Uruguayan modernist Julio Herrera y Reissig –dweller of the abovementioned Panoramas' Tower in Montevideo. And *Bases ecuménicas para la legislación del matrimonio* (Ecumenical Basis for Marriage Legislation); and books on the influence of the stars, or on mysterious gymnastics, or on puppets theater, or on Argentine aboriginal languages, or on the nasal breathing dysfunction, or on the life of insects, more specifically, dragonflies. So much of it that, to a certain extent, this prodigious Babel library would

* In English in the original. (Tr. Note)

** Idem.

*** As in the Illustrations, whenever titles are written in neo-Creole and translation is possible, the English version will appear between brackets, respecting the peculiar syntax and morphology of Xul's language. Otherwise, only the title either in neo-Creole or in other language will be recorded. (Tr. Note)

also look like... the library of Bouvard and Pécuchet.

And the journals and reviews; from the ultraist *Proa*, to which Xul dedicated a watercolor –we cannot find, on the contrary, the frail and mural *Prisma*, previous to Xul's return from Europe–, to the publications of the American Institute of Gaucha Culture, unknown to me. From the so solid Sur or the ephemeral *Clave de Sol* (G Key) –publications among whose founders we may find the great photographer Horacio Coppola, the complete collection of which can be found in Valencia at the IVAM Library–, to the *Revista de Psiquiatría y Criminología* (Psychiatry and Criminology Review). *From Megáfono* (Megaphone) or *Ciclo* (Cycle) –the latter directed by Aldo Pellegrini–, to the "cosmosophic journal" *La Estrella de Occidente* (The West Star). And dozens of other titles similar to the last mentioned, as *The Divine Life* * from Calcutta, *Theosophy in India* ** from Benares, *El Loto Blanco* (The White Lotus) from Barcelona, *Le Voile d'Isis* (Isis' Veil) from Paris, *Dharma* from Buenos Aires...

The library of an avant-garde artist, of a person who knew, possibly not all but most of the European and American modernist trends. Also the library of a magician, an "arcane explorer" (as precisely Aldo Pellegrini stated, he who underlined the deep unity of Xul's life and work). Of a man who knew the one thousand and one paths and ramifications of Tradition, and in whose work, from a certain date on and especially since 1939, founding date of the Pan Klub, there are plenty of not only Christian imagery –*Jesus' Gestation* (1954), but also zodiacal signs, I Chings, Tarot representations, *Planetary masks* (1953)...

It is always terrific to be able to look over a creator's library, especially when he is, as it's the case, a secret creator. It is terrific to be able to travel along certain paths with him, to guess from which readings he took certain teachings. (A similar experience, not long ago, in Bologna, as I could dive into Giorgio Morandi's library.)

The first Xul, a symbolist. Those are the years of discovering Europe, his years in London, Paris, and Munich, after which there came Italy: Florence, Milan, and Zoagli, the place where his mother came from. *Burial* (1914). *Dos Anjos* [Two Angels] (1915). *Anjos* [Angels] (1915). *Ofrenda cuori* [Hearts' offer] (1915). I recall the enlightening postcard to his father, dated May 20th, 1913 (*L'année 1913* [The Year 1913], the subject of an absolutely fundamental book in three volumes written by a group of authors), where, from that sparkling Paris, he declares himself "fascinated by the Russian ballet". An this léads us to the so symbolist and so charged Leon Baskt or Alexandre Benois. Let us remember his interest in Arnold Böcklin, Swiss painter also fundamental for the first Giorgio de Chirico. Let's remember that, from that symbolist substratum, the Argentine would drift toward expressionism –soon he'll purchase, according to one of his letters, the *Der Blaue Reiter* almanac, a book that is, nevertheless, absent from his library–; to be decisively and freeingly carried away by elements coming from futurism –Florence and, more specifically, its down town coffee shop *Le giubbe Rosse* were the culture medium for the movement founded by Marinetti–; abstraction –some 1918 experiments, grouped as *Tapestries*–; and Dada.

Always with regard to symbolism, for me it isn't strange at all to find, in this library around me, such a lot of yellow books by French and Belgium poets, some of whom I mentioned a few lines ago. I'm especially delighted to verify that his owner was an attentive reader of the so often despised Georges Rodenbach, and not only a reader of his prose –*Bruges la morte* (Bruges, the dead) or *Musée de beguines* (Museum of Beguines)–, but also of his poetry, one of the best in the lusty Belgium symbolism. Also one that allows us to better understand the transition of Belgium symbolism to Modernity.

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* In English in the original. (Tr. Note)

** Idem.

Fjord (1943): a move towards Northern Romanticism, so well studied by Rober Rosenblum. Relationships –to be further deepened– also with another late symbolist painter who appears briefly in Rosenblum's book, and who, before passing away, in 1911, would early arrive to the borders of abstraction: Ciurlionis, the painter. (Ciurlionis, a Lithuanian. Xul's father was German but born in Riga, the capital of the neighboring Latvia, a city that obviously reminds us, the Spanish, of the suicide of Ángel Ganivet.)

Before traveling to Europe –there was also a failed project of a trip to Australia–, he was already dreaming of "founding a new religion based on my art and creating a world for my followers".

Port-serpent and ribbons (1925), *Thirteen Saint Masts* (1949), *Nine Saint Masts* (1951) and many other examples: The poetry of the maritime, so cherished by poets, as we may see even by a very short list: Baudelaire, Jean de La Ville de Mirmont, Louis Brauquier, José del Río de Sáinz, Salvat Papasseit, Manuel Antonio. Also by some painters, as Paul Klee or Torres García, the British Edward Wadsworth, the French Pierre Roy, or our Spanish Pancho Cossio, José María Ucelay, Urgano Lugrís... just to mention some artists of this century. (Paintings of ships, already in Xul's Munich works. One of them, with a terribly expressive and nostalgic title: *I Miss Homeland.*)

Related to the maritime poetry, the poetry of flags; flags from consulates –in Valparaíso, they reminded me of a line by the lonely Max Elskamp, another Belgium symbolist who is, nevertheless, absent from this library. Countless flags, also, in Xul's pictures, from the several *Dances and Saintdances* (1925) to the floating *Country* (1931), including those in the vignettes of the first editions of *El tamaño de mi esperanza* [The Size of my Hope] (1926) and *El idioma de los argentinos* [The Language of the Argentines] (1928), the shining Latin American *Drago* [Dragon] (1927)– fairly, one of his best-known images–, and *Soto con trio* [Countryside with Trio] (1930). Beatriz Sarlo pertinently relates the abundance of flags in Xul Solar's works of the '20s, to the always impressing "national diversity" of Buenos Aires. That Babelic side verified by Bruce Chatwin in the first pages of his book on Patagonia, upon opening, down there, the phone book.

As it's the case with other artists of the very first avant-garde –I'm thinking of Erik Satie, Henri Rousseau, Raymond Roussel, the Mexican Juan José Tablada or Kandinsky himself–, Xul is a late creator, with a dark and novelistic prehistory. In his case, it includes violin studies –something he shares with Klee, another symbolist–; a work in the National Penitentiary (1905); a period as school teacher; unfinished studies of Architecture; another job– just for 3 months, in the municipal government of Buenos Aires–; poetic attempts at the beginning of 1910's decade...

Xul and Arturo Martini. A curious two-men exhibition in Milan, 1920 –the catalogue is in one of the Museum showcases.

More Italian connections: in a corner of Xul's house, his 1920 portrait by the Trieste painter Piero Marussig.

Symbolism, and at the same time, obviously, Xul goes clearly beyond symbolism, like most of the great artists formed in that atmosphere: Paul Klee himself, Alfred Kubin –with whom Xul shows more than one coincidence–, Georg Trakl, Picasso, Apollinaire, Pessoa, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Stieglitz, Brancusi, Giorgio de Chirico, José María Eguren –so close to Ciurlionis in so many aspects–, Frank Lloyd Wright...

Often, we run into a very science-fiction Xul, very *The Propeller Island* style. For example, that little jewel *Vuel villa* [Fly Town] (1936), where a port with metaphysical towers is overflown by a fabulous city of the air, that also reminds me, in some aspects, of Erik Satie's graphic inventions. *Or East Gate*

(1935), with its strange wheeled constructions, its staircases going up to heaven, and that hand coming down form a sphere with eyes...

The city in Xul. As it has already been pointed out, he didn't finish his architecture studies. In the mantifierrista adventure, he was a companion of Alberto Prebisch, creator of the Obelisco, Buenos Aires symbol par excellence. He lived during a period when many modern buildings were erected in Buenos Aires, impeccably photographed by Horacio Coppola. A period of deep architectonic debates, visits of relevant foreign personalities as Le Corbusier –I have already mentioned the presence, in Xul's library, of *Vers une architecture*, but there is no evidence that they had the opportunity of meeting each other when Le Corbusier visited the country in 1929–; or as Alberto Sartorio... Uncountable labyrinthine, Piranesian cities by Xul. A thorough list of those cities would be impossibly long. Just remember a few, as a litany. *Houses* (1918). *Bau* [Architecture] (1921), made while he was still in Milan –whose Duomo impressed him so profoundly– and evidencing an early knowledge of new architectonic plannings, more specifically those of expressionist or "activist" slant, made known by *Ruf zum Bauen* (1920). *Movie Theater* (1921). *Elevated Houses* (1922). *Dos rúas* [Two streets] (1922). *Five Houses* (1922). *Theater* (1924) and other related images, that lead us to the neighboring field of scenery, in those days so fashionable among the European avant-garde movements. *Twelve Stairs* (1925). *Pagoda* (1925). *Rocks Lakes* (1933). The already mentioned *Vuel villa* (1936). *Ciudá Lagui* [City Lakes] (1939). *City and abysses* (1946). *Walls Screens* (1948). *Hard cells* (1948). *Neighborhood* (1953). *A Tree Trunks Castle* (1953). *Domus Aurea* (1962).

The exhibition on Xul and architecture, held in 1994 at the Courtauld Institute, London, and cured by the abovementioned Christopher Green, was especially timely. Timely, also, its catalog, full of very interesting trails. For example, the parallelisms set by the British historian between Xul and the German visionary architect Bruno Taut. Or the references, in John King's article, to the abovementioned Prebisch, to the Argentine architect of Russian ascent Wladimiro Acosta, or to the also mentioned Le Corbusier's 1929 trip to Buenos Aires. A critical trip that acquires greater symbolic importance than the one by Marinetti 3 years before, because it is more imbedded in the weft of the metropolis itself –"Buenos Aires is an aggregate of local cataclysms".

Together with cities, visions– *Saint Hills* (1921), *Saint Hill far away* (1938), *Edges of Saint Hill* (1944), of sacred hills, of retirements on top of a rock, such as in Meteora, or in Mount Athos, or Pothala, Lhassa.

In his late production, a lake image strongly catches my attention: the one of the *Delta Façade Project* (1954): Xul and Lita had just purchased their house at the Delta of Tigre, where he would die 9 years later. Tigre, a landscape for ever linked to the memory of Leopoldo Lugones' suicide. A landscape to which the "homme pressé" –me– in spite of 4 trips to Buenos Aires, hasn't yet been able to lead his steps. As he hasn't, despite his deep love for Francisco López Merino's poems, been able to lead them to La Plata. The city of Henry J. M. Levet's poem on "le consul de France à La Plata", who couldn't overcome his spleen in spite of "les attraits des plus aimables argentines"...

Words, uncountable words also in Xul's work, from those that simply go free –"en liberté", sailing among forms–, to those organized as architectures. Among them, I find especially remarkable those that pile up as *Façade for a City Project* (1954); those that draw *Mary's Church* (1954); those that *Trees and Letters* (1955) mix up; or those making up a monumental, almost pop *Label* (1960), faced by a walker with a staff. *Les mots dans la peinture* (Words in painting), said definitively Michel Butor, and

in Xul's case the founder of the "nouveau roman" would have a hard time studying the way in which those words intermingle with images, in a very similar way as it happens in certain Italian parolibrism works. Yes, and it shouldn't be forgotten the years Xul stayed in Italy, and the presence of *Les mots en liberté* and other futurist propaganda material in his library, as well as his personal contact with Marinetti in 1926.

Music, also. *Coral Bach* (Music) (1950): a work among the others, unfortunately not one of the best by Xul, a tribute to the immortal German composer, regarding whom it is necessary to remember, mainly, the Albersian variations.

"I'm the world's champion of a game no one knows: pan-chess."

A praise to the small size, once more. As for Paul Klee, once more, a small piece of paper is enough for Xul to make a world come out of it.

Paul Klee, dweller of small worlds, of *kleine welte*, to use the so accurate term used by Kandinsky regarding his friend and companion at the Bauhaus faculty. "Klee visits Xul Solar": a great title and a great idea for a recent exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires. I wonder if anyone, on that occasion, would remember that one of the poems that best expresses the greatness of the small in Klee is a poem by Alejandra Pizarnik, included in her book *Árbol de Diana* [Diana's Tree] (1962).

La mesma Orienta [The same "Orienta"] (192x). *A yogi* (1931). Xul and China, Japan, India. Lots of books on those cultures, as it was unavoidable in the library of a man placed in Xul's spiritual coordinates. Osvaldo Svanascini, the greatest Argentine scholar on Far East art, was a close friend of the painter and wrote the first monograph on his work (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1961), by then only known in his native country. With regard to that, it should be remembered that only one year later some of his paintings were shown in Europe, in the Argentine exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. In that city, in 1977, Jacques Lassaigne organized, in close contact with Xul's widow, his first European retrospective exhibition.

Xul's neo-Creole or "neocreol". The pan language. A Latin American language, where elements coming from Portuguese, German, and English would melt, upon the basis of Spanish. A linguistic world extremely difficult to apprehend for me. In his library, there are lots of publications evidencing his interest in languages, both ordinary and invented. It was taking Xul as an inspiration, that Borges wrote his short-story "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius", a text on imaginary languages.

Painting by the Martinfierrista generation. Not much but from Guttero and some dark painters, in which I'm quite interested. Painters influenced by the Italian *Novecento* and backed, besides, by art critic Atalaya, among whom Cúnsolo and Lacámera –painters of La Boca neighborhood- stand out. The hard core included the 3 painters –Emilio Pettoruti, Norah Borges and Xul– who exhibited their works in Amigos del Arte, in 1926, due to the often mentioned Marinetti's visit to Buenos Aires, together with architects Prebisch and Vautier. (Abstraction itself begins in Buenos Aires almost 5 years later with Juan del Prete, who had stayed in Europe, and –as we know now– with Esteban Lisa. The latter was a Spanish-born painter –from Toledo, to be more precise–, and so hidden that, when his name emerged in the international scene just a few years ago, some people thought he was an invention.)

Xul, a witness to the plagues of the "century of acronyms"* -as our dying century was named by Pedro Salinas in a synthetic and definitive formula-, which inspired a poem by his generation mate Dámaso Alonso. For the Argentine painter, the Second World War meant the inspiration for *Rua*

* In Spanish, there is a phonetic pun, impossible to reproduce in English, consisting of the similar spelling of the words "siglo" (century) and "sigla" (acronym). (Tr. Note).

Ruini [Street of Ruins] (1949), and *Ruins* (1950), lucid and piercing testimonials of his disenchanted, distant glance. Already in 1925, he had painted a premonitory *Militia*, that appeared the following year –when he painted *Barbarians*–, in the cover of *Martín Fierro* no. 30–32, together with a text on Marinetti by architect Alberto Prebisch. Marinetti, precisely one of modernity's most "century of acronyms", most "régime" style writers (in his case, fascist).

Xul, in the end, also a political man, in spite of everything. Xul himself, also behind partisan acronyms: a peronist, as some other matinfierristas would finally be. And there we have, facing Borges' radical opposition to peronism, the adhesion to that movement by Leopoldo Marechal, Nicolás Olivari –the "unicalue" poet–, Raúl Scalbrini Ortiz, the "Bernini" of *Adán Buenosayres* as I have already said. Scalabrini Ortiz, the brilliant essayist –of course, absent in this library: here we can't even find *El hombre que está solo y espera* (The Man who is Alone and Waits)–, who became a meticulous and consequently delirious historian of the Argentine Railways, on which he wrote several volumes.

I realize that some of us, art critics who have written on Xul, have also written on Joaquín Torres García. But, was it there any contact between both painters? I have already mentioned the presence, in this library on the other side of the river, of a book by the Uruguayan painter. There is also an album with clippings on him, and a photo... and his astral chart. When Xul traveled to Montevideo, in 1950, it was only due to a Conference on Guaraní language and Torres had died a year before. Little more do we know, and probably we will never know anything else. Xul and Torres, anyway, in their shared South, as two of the milestones on which the future Latin American art would unavoidably be built.

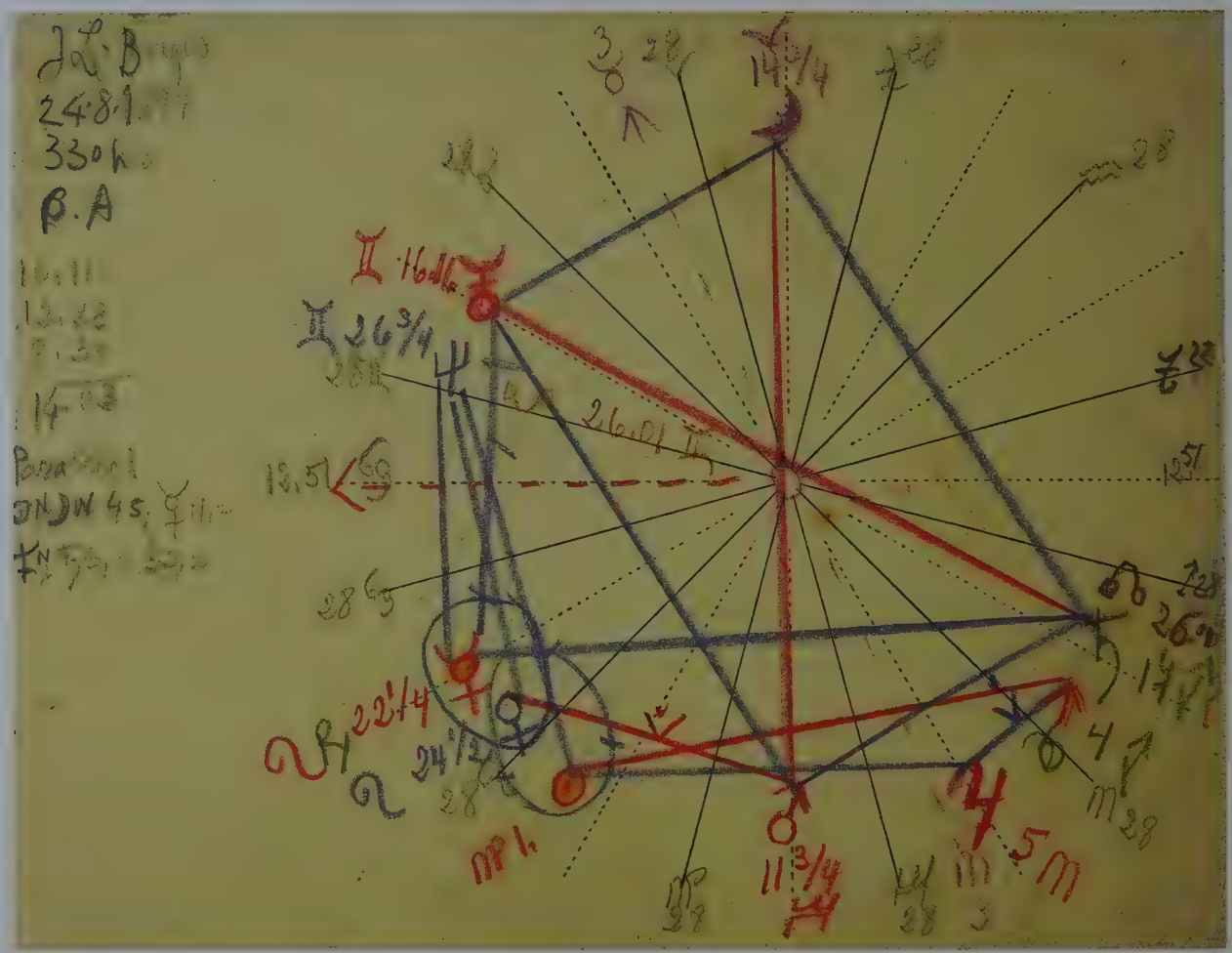
Xul, in the second volume of the fascinating memoirs by María Rosa Oliver, as one of the central secret characters of Argentine cultural life in those days: "the moonfaced man, with shrubby eyebrows and usually a black French cap, by whom I discovered that an angel, to be one, must not necessarily have an angel face. Xul Solar, the inventor of the pan-Creole language and of forms and colors that, to me, were precious stones brought from one of those planets over which that Roc bird flew".

Xul and his neo-Creole poem in the first an only number of *Imán*, the Latin American review, a formal imitation of *Commerce or Bifur*, made in Paris in 1931 by Elvira de Alvear –another singular Argentine woman.

More trails on Xul in *Un pintor ante el espejo* [A Painter in Front of the Mirror] (1968), the also fascinating memoirs by Emilio Pettoruti –which, as many of the materials I've used for the present work, I owe to Natalio Povarché–, where there are excellent biographical sketches of the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui, Marinetti, and obviously many Argentine writers and artists of the great generation. Pettoruti, in 1916 Florence, had portrayed his friend Xul, who 8 years later would write on him in *Martín Fierro*. Pettoruti titled the portrait *Luce-Elevazione* (Light-Elevation): "I didn't represent his features objectively, but the impression I had when I met him. The impression of a being who raised above himself, all light and all spirit". Eight years later, they would return together to their homeland, to whose artistic greatness both would contribute as very few others.

Luce-Elevazione: I don't think it's a bad ending for this first tour around the enchanted territories of Xul Solar.

Biala Bora, August 2000



Jorge Luis Borges' Astral Chart (n.d.)
Jorge Luis Borges International Foundation.

Jorge Luis Borges

Writings on Xul Solar, 1949-1968

A man versed in every field of knowledge, curious about everything arcane, father of writings, of languages, of utopias, of mythologies, a guest in hells and in heavens, author and panajedrecista (pan-chess player), and an astrologer perfect in indulgent irony and in generous friendship.

There are minds that profess probity, others, indiscriminate abundance; the bountiful invention of Xul Solar did not exclude honest rigor. His paintings are documents of the ultra-earthly mondo (world), the metaphysical world where gods take the forms of the imagination that dreamed them. Impassioned architecture, joyous colors, the many circumstantial details, labyrinths, the homunculus and the angels unforgettably define this delicate and monumental art.

The taste of our times vacillates between mere lineal pleasure, an emotive transcription, and second-rate realism. In an ambitious way that tries to be modest, Xul Solar renews the mystical painting of those that do not see with physical eyes in the sacred scope of Blake, Swedenborg, of yogis and bards.

Prologue for the Catalog of Xul Solar's Individual Exhibit at the Samos Gallery in Buenos Aires, 1949.

We live accepting reality. Better said, that which negligence and the press call reality. We judge a product to be genuine because those who manufacture and sell it declare it to be so. We speak of geometric figures and not of zoological animals. We venerate a thinker according to the frequency with which we see his photograph and hear his name; we measure his merit by his fame or by that falsification of fame we call publicity. Not Alejandro Xul Solar. Theologians affirm that the preservation of the universe is a perpetual creative act, and that if God forgets us for a single minute we would disappear, as if fulminated by a fire without light. Xul thought that man is also charged with the mission to recreate. Poets and thinkers have suspected that life is a dream, or that living and dreaming are analogous activities; our friend felt that we could direct that unanimous dream and reshape it, since nothing leads us to assume that the sum of the possibilities of the cosmos have been exhausted. The rest of us live on memory; Xul Solar, on dreaming and working.

The ironic gods provided him with this incredulous and timid country, one that is resigned to all kinds of practices and opinions, because it does not offer them its faith, just a docile indifference. When facing silence or a smile, Xul embraced the destiny of proposing a system of universal reforms. He tried to recreate religions, astrology, ethics, society, numbering, writing, a mechanics of language, vocabulary, the arts, instruments, and games. He premeditated two languages. One, *creol*, was the Spanish of America, shortened, exalted, and multiplied; the other, *panlengua* (pan-tongue), whose words, through the value of the letters, had their own definition, in the manner of the analytical language of John Wilkins. He also conceived a semicircular keyboard, that simplified the work of the pianist, as well as his never-concluded, always more-complicated *panjuego* (pan-game) which, included within the species of chess, encompassed a variety of fields and could be played on different levels. All of this in Buenos Aires, home to imitative innovators and punctual mirrors. Predictably, Xul Solar's utopias failed, but that failure is ours, not his. We have not known how to deserve them.

If it were necessary to relate Xul's painting to any specific school, that school would be German expressionism, but no one can ignore that schools are conventions or fictions created by historians, when not strategies of ambition. It's individuals who are lasting and essential. Xul's work was not executed to illustrate a theory or to justify an argument. The work intimately resembles the man who made it, a rarity in this country.

Xul was the painter of his visions. People accept visionaries from other latitudes and other epochs but, if clóse at hand, they are denied. The man who saw the atrocious marvels recorded in the Apocalypse receives our veneration; a contemporary visionary is, a priori, absurd. Xul is now a part of yesterday: therefore, we can offer him the same respect that we grant Blake, who also drew strange things revealed to him by the eyes of his spirit.

We can add the incessant rewarding of the colors, of lightness, of geometry, and of a kind of radiant fortuity, to the fantastic or mystical virtues of his singular work.

Thank you, my friend who has not died, with whom I once shared the verbal music of Swinburne and Johannes Becher and who helped me to penetrate the labyrinths of the gnosis and the cabala, for this revitalizing lesson and for the lesson of your life. Both, by a diversity of symbols, tell us that our cowardice and our indolence can be blamed for tomorrow and yesterday being the same, and that imagination and love could transform the Universe in the matter of a second, if they truly tried, and that Paradise is here.

Thank you, Lita, too.

Prologue to the catalog for Homenaje a Xul Solar (A Tribute to Xul Solar), an exhibition held at the National Museum of Fine Arts.

Ladies, gentlemen, dear friends of Xul Solar:

Perhaps you all know of my fondness for etymology, and I want to begin by analyzing a word that has had little good fortune, the word "cosmopolitan", that now evokes trips, tourism, the international set, those who do not belong to any country, a kind of laborious frivolity. Nevertheless, the word "cosmopolitan" was the invention of the Stoics and I want to explain why. For the Greeks, one's homeland was the city of birth. That is why we talk of Heraclitus of Ephesus, of Zeno of Elea, and so on. The Stoics had the extraordinary idea that a man did not have to be just the citizen of his city, polis, but he could also be a citizen of the cosmos, a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the universe, or according to the German translation: *Weltburger*.

Well then, I have known few men worthy of that title, worthy of being citizens of the universe and of believing themselves to be such, and perhaps the only cosmopolitan, citizen of the universe, that I have known was Xul Solar. I met him around 1923 or 1924, my memory fails when it comes to dates, which does not matter because dates are conventions.

People talk now about that generation. They talk of the renovation of the arts and letters. But I felt from the beginning that there was something very different about Xul Solar. The rest of us (I took part only marginally in those discussions) were ignorant but always respectful in our innovations. For example, there were cubists, but it was known that cubism existed in France. There were 'free-versers', but the words of Walt Whitman, who published *Leaves of Grass* in 1885, had reached us. As had something of Blake's from the eighteenth century, and the Psalms. What I mean to say is that what was done here, in a certain way, was a delayed reflex, a delayed mirror-image of what was done in other parts of the world, especially in Europe.

But the case of Xul Solar was very different. It is true that the name Xul has now been attached to the most intense and vast of the movements of renovation of that period; I refer to German, or better said, to Judeo-German expressionism. But I think that in the case of Xul, there was not any imitation. I think that in his case there was something more important. There was an essential affinity. I met Xul and I understood that I had never been with a man with as rich, as heterogeneous, as unpredictable, such an incessant imagination. In general, we live from memory. Our life, as Emerson said, tends to be a quotation, "Life becomes a quotation"*. But Xul lived inventing and thinking continually.

I remember a summer day, a dreadful summer day in Buenos Aires, in December or January. I arrived at Xul's home on Laprida St. and I asked Xul what he had done, and I immediately understood that it was absurd to ask someone what he had done, when it was already a lot just to survive the oppression of the damp heat. Xul answered, "No, I didn't do anything. Ah! Yes," he added afterwards. "I founded twelve religions after lunch." "Twelve religions *pos coming*", I think he said, but my memory for *creol* is, without doubt, defective and outdated. I say outdated for Xul's sake; he had invented twelve languages, and he also lived continuously reforming them. He explained to me that the number twelve corresponded to the twelve symbols, to the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

Xul believed that the truth was one, but that each of us –according to the horoscope– was predestined by a version of the truth, and that then men should choose the most adequate religion according to their horoscope. "One must not take a step without the horoscope," Xul would say.

I remember that I was explaining the duodecimal system to my wife at Cambridge and I recalled a conversation that I had had with Xul. We reached the conclusion that it would be very easy to

* In English in the original. (Tr. Note)

modify the signs, that is to say, to add two more signs, in such a way that 1-zero would mean 12; and 1-zero-zero would mean 12 by 12, 144. But we reached the conclusion that it would be difficult for people to adopt this innovation. They would also have to modify their oral language, that is to say, they would now have to call one hundred 144, and so on. What was very rare at that time, as it is rare now too, was that Xul was not worried about literary fashions. Xul understood, better said, Xul felt, what we call reality is really what remains of ancient imaginations. We accept the structure of government. It is true that this structure had been established at some point. We affect a language, and it is true that that language has been established and has its roots in other languages. We tend to believe that this complex world in which we live, which, to a great degree, is foreign to us, is reality, but Xul knew that reality is continually modifying itself. He believed that his mission was to participate in that ongoing revolution.

I have said that Xul was cosmopolitan, a citizen of the cosmos. The truth is that he was interested in everything, even the most minute; or better said, for him as for the divine, nothing is minute. Everything was worthy of study, and he studied everything, and he reformed everything. If we try to find a man similar to Xul, we would have to think of William Blake. His work is not similar, of course, no one could confuse a picture of Xul's with one of Blake's, but the works are similar in the sense that each emerged out of intimate experience, the works of both were done by mystical painters. Xul did not believe in modern art especially. He had a great knowledge of art history, and most innovations seemed just arcaisms to him. Xul told me that he was a realistic painter, a realistic painter in the sense that what he painted was not an arbitrary combination of forms or lines. What he painted was what he had seen in his visions. Xul explained to me that visionaries see –we could say– forms of good and forms of evil, and that they speak with the divinities that guide the world. Xul believed in many divinities; he did not believe that the idea of a single God, a concept of monotheism, was an advantage. But he also believed that the visionary gives certain forms to these intimate forces and these divinities. Therefore, a Christian mystic, a Buddhist mystic, and an Islamic mystic can be equally sincere; the three see and hear the same things, but each gives it his own form, that of his dreams.

I realize that as I talk about Xul, I am emphasizing the mystical, and this could be an erroneous strategy for me, since what might remain of my words is the idea that Xul's intelligence was above all a fantastic and arbitrary one, a mere curiosity. Nevertheless, it was not like that, and I want to mentión one of the last times, almost the last time, that I saw Xul. I was at the National Library, with my small seminar of students in Anglo-Saxon. We were reading Finsburg's "Heroic Fragment". Xul arrived and we showed him the Anglo-Saxon text. Xul, who had read so much, had never held an Anglo-Saxon text in his hands. It was not necessary to explain the two runic letters of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet to him because he already knew them.

And then I read five or six of the first verses aloud and we analyzed them etymologically. When we finished the passage, Xul told me, "I think that you are pronouncing it incorrectly." I was astonished and I told him that I was pronouncing the words according to the rules of Dr. Suich and other linguists. He told me, "That may be the case, but do you think that there is any reason to believe that the Saxons, on adopting the Latin alphabet, would not use it phonetically." The argument seemed interesting but I thought –I believe that Xul may be listening to me now and smiling– that perhaps the authority of the philologists might be more valid. Then, several months later, I traveled

to Scotland, where I spent an unforgettable afternoon with a group of Germanists in Edinburgh. We reread Finsburg's "Heroic Fragment" and I realized that they read it just as Xul had read it. I asked them what was the basis for their pronunciation, and they told me that they had reached that conclusion through a comparative study of the dialects of England and Scotland, Denmark and Norway. I told them, "Well, I had a friend in Buenos Aires who never really studied these dialects, and he reached the same conclusion by just exercising his intelligence." That is to say, Xul opened a text in an unknown language and read it just the way these Germanists did after their extensive studies.

I also remember dialogues between Xul and Pedro Henríquez Ureña –that name has to be familiar to you– and Amado Alonso, and an erudite man, Pullman. I remember that Xul, in those conversations, was certainly not the one who knew the least. Xul had delved –I could not say superficially but rather intuitively– into every field and even innovated in many of them.

It is absurd to say that Xul failed. As I have said in this prologue, we are the ones that failed. We have not known how to be worthy of him. When we speak of a man from another epoch, and Xul is now from another epoch –I myself am from another epoch, I am already an arcaism– that is understandable. They say that for such a time, what that man did was audacious; but in Xul's case, it did not happen in that way; in Xul's case, what happened was exactly the opposite.

I believe that we will continue to live, that our children will continue to live, and that our grandchildren will continue to live, and I do not know what they will understand of Xul, that extraordinary man. We are surrounded by much greater eloquence here than my vacillating –vacillating because of the emotion– words. We stand before the work of Xul, before his pictorial work. There is, of course, his linguistic work and that literary work "*Los Signos*" (The Signs). It is the tale of his excursions to the other world, because Xul, like the Swedish mystic, Svetmori Swedenborg, also ventured into the other world, and this has been recorded and we can read it, we can decipher it.

I want to conclude with an anecdote. When William Morris, the translator of the Scandinavians, the man who resurrected English painting, English graphic arts, English poetry, died, everyone also said that England has suffered a great loss. One of his disciples, Bernard Shaw, said, "No, we can only lose a man like William Morris with our own death; William Morris is here. We must be worthy of his lofty memory, we must continue his thinking just as Plato did with Socrates." I believe that when Plato wrote his dialogues, he did it to play with the idea that Socrates was at his side. When Plato faced a problem, he would say, "What would Socrates have done?" And I believe that we should do the same with Xul.

I do not know what death is. I believe that Xul did not give it too much importance. Xul believed in reincarnation, not as a curiosity, but as a truth. I would like to believe that Xul is here. It does not seem outlandish to me; death is so strange that it does not seem less incredible to believe in the return of someone, in his urgency. However that may be, Xul is here, in his works. Xul lives in my memory. At times, when I think I have invented something, I realize that Xul is inventing it through me or, perhaps, in spite of me.

I invite you now to forget all that I have said. I extend an invitation to all of you that we live together, that we share life together, that we *poli*-live, that we *pan*-live, as Xul would say, in this world of his visions, of his lines, of the joy, the purity, and the melody of his colors.

The words of Jorge Luis Borges at the inauguration of Homenaje a Xul Solar (A Tribute to Xul Solar) at the Provincial Museum of Fine Arts of La Plata on July 17, 1968.

The Book of Heaven: a biographical and critical approach to Alejandro Xul Solar*

At the beginning of the 1950's, Alejandro Xul Solar spoke of himself as "self-taught in a variety of fields, within and outside of schools". He summarized his extensive career as an artist-creator in this phrase. He had chosen to travel an unconventional path to reach this point. His prolonged stay in Europe was conditioned by his need to incorporate a superior knowledge: philosophy, metaphysics, astrology, the esoteric, Hinduism, the religions of the Middle East and the pre-Columbian world. These areas of knowledge were some of these that contributed to model his complex spiritual world. A visionary and a confessed utopian, his approach to the esthetic proposals of the so-called historical avant-garde was overshadowed by a need to investigate his own inner self. And if his artistic language was linked to them irrevocably, his painting transcended purely formal investigation in order to become truly narrative texts in images.
In his watercolors and gouaches, Xul continued his explorations, as visionary as ever, of other landscapes. He designed new forms of architecture, and with his jottings created new systems of artistic writing that emerged from a personal inner logic. In his creative work, that he understood in an integral way, sought to universalize different worlds of wisdom, making them accessible to everyone, following an explicit will to propagate brotherhood that guided him in his practice of the "*catrólico*" (ca = cabalistic, tro = astrological, li = liberal, co = cooperative).

* *Patricia Artundo*

[Anónimo]. Emilio Schulz Riga and Agustina Solari. [191?]. Period copy, silver gel, 12 x 9 cm.

1887

Oscar Alejandro Agustín Schulz Solari was born on December 14 in San Fernando, a suburb of Argentina's capital in the adjacent Province of Buenos Aires, near the historic Canal of the Carupá. Here nature was still difficult to contain; the river rose and flooded, houses had to be built on stilts, and the ever-active nautical traffic on the Luján River animated the landscape for the first 13 years of his life. His parents, Emilio Schulz Riga (b. Riga, Latvia, 1853-1925 and Agustina Solari (b. San Pietro di Roveretto, Italy, 1865-1958), were part of the important wave of immigrants that arrived in Argentina during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At that moment, the country was undergoing a dynamic process of growth and modernization.

1891

A sister named Sara was born. She died in 1894 before her third birthday. Starting that year, for reasons related to his work, Xul's father made a series of trips within Argentina and also to Brazil. The family, at that time, moved twice, which meant a change of schools for young Oscar.

1900

Xul began to study the violin, which he soon had to abandon because of an accident. In 1901 the family moved to the city of Buenos Aires and he began secondary school at the *Colegio Nacional-Sección Norte* (the National School-Northern Branch). There is practically no information available about those years: nothing more than changes of schools and addresses. In 1902, the family moved to 636 Mansilla St. and later to 2936 Mansilla St.

1903-1907

Emilio Schulz Riga joined the staff of the National Penitentiary as a second chief technician in the workshops. From that year until 1923, he prepared more than 300 plans, projects, and engineering studies for the institution. Between 1905 and 1906, Xul worked there for a few months, before starting his studies at the Engineering School of the University of Buenos Aires, where he remained until 1907.

At that time he began an activity that he was to continue for the rest of his life. He clipped images that awakened his curiosity from daily

Alejandro Scchulz Solar. Clippings notebook [after 1906], Brand "Cuaderno San Martín".

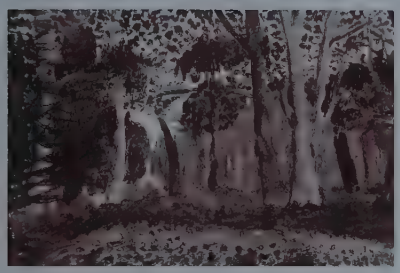
newspapers. Through this exercise in selectivity, Xul created his own universe of interests. This universe included works by sculptors such as Vigeland, Toft, and Thornycroft, scenes of customs of peoples in the Orient and Africa, figures of Egyptian gods, historical personalities, the Feast of the Epiphany in Russia and, in addition, fantastic beings: the dragon of the cave, the king of the Cyclops, and gigantic marine creatures.

1908

Without any formal apprenticeship in drawing and painting, Xul "trained" himself using manuals like Armand Cassegne's *Le dessin pour tous* (Drawing for Everyone) that taught the student by a system of copying. He took an office job with the municipal government but only remained there for a short period of time.

1909-1912

There is no family record of these years. His aunt Clorinda (1869-1959), a sister of his mother [who together were known as his "mamas"], had interrupted recording the events in Oscar's life in her *Diary*. We know, nevertheless, that these were years when his health was constantly undermined by anemia and that he was undergoing a severe crisis that alternated between two extremes, spiritual ecstasy and a death wish:



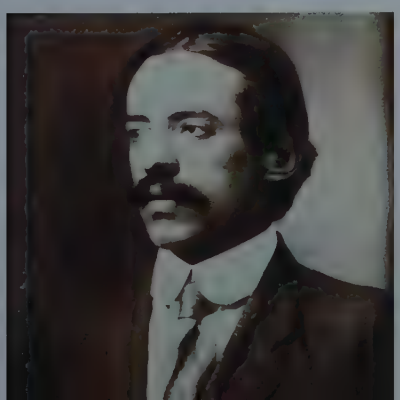
Emilio Schulz Riga. "Copy of a watercolor by Oscar" [before 1912]. Period copy, silver gel, 8 x 10 cm.

> *What are these ever-growing afflictions that make me yearn for profound sleep, total forgetfulness, the finality of death! In brilliant light, in colors never before seen, in chords of ecstasy and Hell, in astonishing timbres, in a brand new beauty that is mine, in my innumerable offspring, I must forget all of the obsolete that suffocates me: Yes, my noxious sorrows are really birth pains. I am pregnant with an immense and new world*

His friends suggested that he should take a more rational attitude toward life and that he should assume the responsibilities normally expected of a 23-year-old. He should be able to support himself, be more decisive, and develop a greater sense of reality.

He spent all of 1910 waiting for a job that never materialized and the next year preparing for a trip to Australia with his friend Diego L. Molinari. The trip never worked out because another opportunity appeared. He had the chance to get a "pension", according to what he wrote which, in reality, referred to a grant to continue his studies in a European city, a common practice back then. He did not give up on the idea, and by the end of 1911, he had put together himself enough money to enable him to travel to Europe. He did his first paintings with a transcendental bent during that period. His idea was "to found a new religion based on my art and create a world for my followers." He wrote in prose then, but called what he had written his first dramatic and musical poem.

Emilio Schulz Riga. Enlargement of an Alejandro Xul Solar's portrait. 1914. Period copy, silver gel, mounted on paper, 1914, 8 x 6.4 cm. At the back, caption: "Oscar A. Schulz-Solari. Turin 1913, enlarged by his Dad in Buenos Aires.



1912-1913

At last, but not quite as expected, he sailed on the *Highlander Carrier* for London on April 5. His father thought it was just an adventure and that he would be back home in no time at all. He arrived in London on April 28 and soon departed for Turin.

In April, just a year after Xul's departure, his mother and his aunt arrived in London. During 1913, Xul alternated his stays between Paris, Turin and Roveretto, where his 'mamas' had installed themselves.

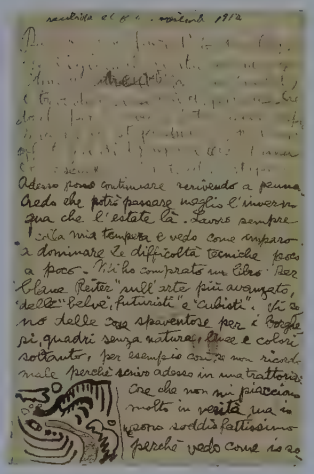
He had his first visions and, in later testimony, remembered in English: "I had begun sitting in about 1913 (often?/always?) trying with no results. Once in Zoagli saw worms writing. In London (Chapel) carpet upright with 2 toy faces, but living."

1914

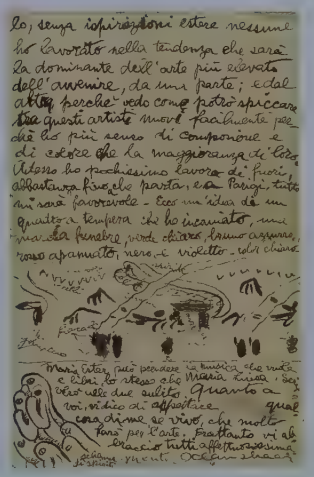
He found an important nucleus of Argentine artists in Paris. He would get together with several of them: painters Alfredo Guttero and Juan M. Gavazzo Buchardo, musician Vicente Forte, and sculptor Luis Falcini. He would visit Xul in the pigeonhole where he worked. It was "a hole under the spiral staircase, a kind of landing where he could barely move his long legs. Supported by the mast or axis of the spiral, his harmonium occupied the foreground. Xul Solar curled around its sound box in order to produce chords that could transport him to the Olympus of his dreams [...]."

Landscape with Monument [1] and *Many Phoenix's Nest* are among the oil paintings that have been catalogued from that year. His proximity to the expressionism found in Der Blaue Reiter is noticeable, combined with his own strong symbolic content and his choice of a simplified and schematic imagery.

It is probable that he now began to read the works of Rudolf Steiner, among them *La science occulte* (Occult Science); starting then and during the coming decades, he would acquire a



Alejandro Schulz Solar. Letter to his family. [Turin, October 1912] 21 x 13.3 cm.



1 When titles of Xul's works are written in neo-Creole and translation is possible, the English version will appear between brackets, respecting the peculiar syntax and morphology of Xul's language. When there is no possible translation, only the title either in neo-Creole or in other language will be recorded. (Tr. Note)

Filippo T. Marinetti. Zang Tumb Tuuum Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912 Parole in Libertá. Milano, Edizione Futuriste De "Poesia", 1914.

ARTE PITTURA E SCULTURA - MOSTRE TEMPORANEE - MILANO - VIA GIULINI, 4 - VIA DANTE, 10 - TEL. 44-09
27 NOVEMBRE - 16 DICEMBRE - DALLE ORE 10 ALLE 19 - SETTIMA ESPOSIZIONE: MOSTRA PERSONALE DELLO SCULTORE ARTURO MARTINI E DEL PITTORE ALESSANDRO XUL SOLARI

Exhibition Catalog Mostra personale dello scultore Arturo Martini e del pittore Alessandro Xul Solari. Arte Gallery. Milan, November 27 – December 16 [1920].

quantity of Steiner's books (thirty in all) in different editions.
He first came into contact with Aleister Crowley that year, although he did not talk with him, as he would later recall, because Crowley gave him "the impression of a Yankee executive." Nevertheless, he read his *Book Four*, a complete course in magic with practical instructions for yoga and mysticism.

1915-1916

In spite of the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Xul remained in Paris for most of 1915, moving to Roveretto in October. In the middle of 1916 he went to Florence to visit painter Emilio Pettoruti, who had been living there since 1913. By then Pettoruti, who came from the city of La Plata, the capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, had met several of the principal artists of the Italian school of futurism and had produced his own first abstract works.
During these initial years of continuous traveling, the variety of Xul's interests can be seen in the diversity of reading material he devoured: religion, metaphysics, mythology, Buddhism, astrology, the esoteric, yoga, and hypnotism. He also read Emile Verhaeren, Maurice Maeterlink, Johannes Becher, William Blake, H. G. Wells, Stéphane Mallarmé, Jean-Arthur Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue, and Paul Fort, among many other authors.

1917-1918

At Pettoruti's invitation, he moved to Milan, where his friend had just installed his studio. He remained there for two months, working at the Argentine consulate. He alternated his sojourns in Milan with visits to his 'mamas' in Zoagli.
Xul began to give special value to the support for the paper on which he was painting his watercolors, and in 1918 he incorporated a new technique, one that he would continue to employ during the coming years. The support became an integral part of the painting and could be considered as part of a new unity: a space in which his painting breaks with the borders of the paper and expands toward the exterior, establishing a strong tension in terms of the plane. He began at the same time to work with what he called his architectures, which accompanied his designs for objects, his "décoras" (decorative objects) in an integrated way.
When the Great War ended, Latvia, under Russian domination since the beginning of the eighteenth century, received its independence.

1919

Xul now began, with increasing regularity, to incorporate phrases into his work to clarify and reinforce the meaning of his paintings. In these works, his intention to modify language became clear in the investigations he was to undertake in the following decade, regarding his intention to formulate "*neocriollo*" (*neo-Creole*). It was to be a new language created out of a union of Spanish and Portuguese, the two languages that are used by the two major blocks of inhabitants in Latin America. During his stay in London, he was given *The Vision and the Voice: Being the Cries of the Thirty Aethyrs* and bought *The Equinox*, both by Crowley.

1920

Xul attended the *XII Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia* (XII International Exposition of Art of the City of Venice) where Pettoruti was participating with a painting. The Biennial presented exhibitions of work by Paul Cézanne, Alexander Archipenko, Ferdinand Hodler, and Beltran Masse.
Thanks to a recommendation from Pettoruti, Xul exhibited his work for the first time at the Galleria Arte in Milan, directed by Mario Buggelli. In a space he shared with sculptor Arturo Martini, Xul presented 46 watercolors, 20 oils, and 4 gouaches. The prologue to the catalog for Martini was written by Carlo Carrá, and for Xul by Pettoruti, who, for the first time, referred to the visionary character of Xul's painting:

> *And if someone thinks that there is anything strange or esoteric to him, one should not blame his international culture and his sojourns in London and Paris, but it is enough to remember his other origin, the Russian, for example, on his father's side. He owes his mystic, non-religious sensitivity to that background. Sometimes it takes him into extravagant compositions. What is a strange mystery in his fantastic visions is that imagination has no control over reality and is stimulated by a refined sensitivity. It seems that*

[Anonym] Emilio Pettoruti, Alejando Xul Solar and relatives. Zoagli, 1921. Period copy, silver gel, 14.3 x 8.7 cm.

he can see into a privileged area and can discover an entire world of phantoms and of unknown suggestiveness. There is something that approaches intellectual delirium in his lyrical reduction and transfiguration, in this free creation of his artistic world.[2]

Xul continued to write prose and poetry. He transmuted external reality, through visual metaphors, into an inner reality charged with emotional intensity in "Pampa rojiza" (Reddish Pampa), written in a first version of neo-Creol.

Over blue grasses, tiny flames of gold tremble
human-faced butterflies
above the marsh sift
and in the milky sky a big red moon,
carillons in the distance of crystal and platinum
forming iridescent clouds over the turquoise city
there towers and towers accumulate on the cliffs,
duplicated in the great lake...
the vast pure capital.

1921

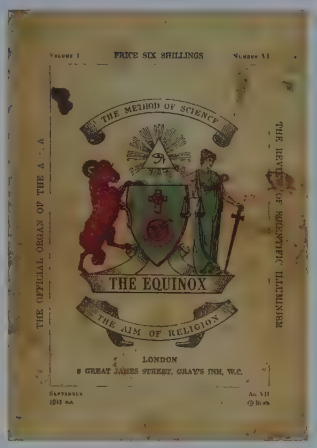
At the beginning of the year, the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Razón* published an article titled "Decadence in Today's Art", dedicated to the exhibit at the Galleria Arte. The article comented on the show's intention to denounce the reactionary climate that could be felt in the cultural circles of Buenos Aires in relation to new esthetic proposals.

Xul traveled to Rome where he stayed for several months. Pettoruti was there, participating in the *Esposizione Nazionale della Città de Roma* (National Exposition of the City of Rome). In response to the support of his friend, Xul sent a note to the La Plata newspaper, El Argentino, in relation to Pettoruti's work:

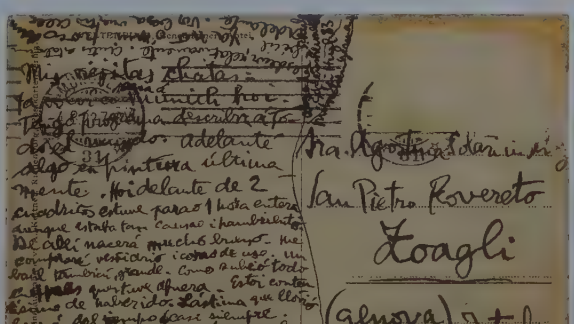
He is a "pionner" (pioneer). The first Argentine that has done mosaics with a free, open-minded technique. His costumes for theater and puppet shows are innovative. They correspond to sceneries of the future, very plastic and iridescent. As do his sketches, which could be for the best fashion designers. Every branch of the decorative arts attracts his attention, and it is desirable that he dedicates himself to each of them with all his energy. We need this kind of artist. How do you decorate nowadays? Always more or less within Roman columns and squares, (when will it end?), garlands, ornamentation, etc. When our artist can dispose of great spaces to decorate, without being subjected to the will of an architect, he will become a liberator of guidelines. Also when he develops his sculpture, he will reveal other new qualities.

Finally, after nine years of living in Europe, Xul moved to Germany and in October settled in Munich, where he became an assistant at the Kunst-und Lehrwerksätten (Workshops for Art & Teaching).

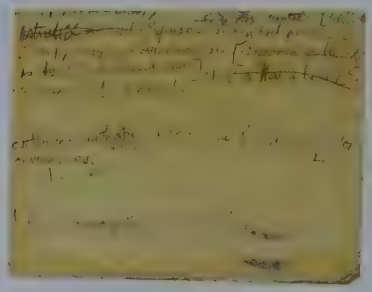
Pettoruti arrived soon after. Both were looking for a better financial situation than they could find in France or Italy to enable them to stay on in Europe. A similar option was chosen by other Argentine artists, like Guttero, who were then visiting German cities, including Munich. Pettoruti, at an exhibit of works by Paul Klee at the Hans Goltz Gallery and Bookshop, had the opportunity to meet Klee.


PRICE SIX SHILLINGS
THE METHOD OF SCIENCE
THE AIM OF RELIGION
THE EQUINOX
THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE A. ∴ A.
THE REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC ILLUMINISM
LONDON
3 GREAT JAMES STREET, GRAY'S INN, W.C.

The Equinox. The Official Organ of the A. "A.", vol. 1, n. 6, a. 7, September 1911.



Alejandro Schulz Solar. Postcard to Agostina and Clorinda Solari. [München, 4-8-22]. Autograph in black ink, 9 x 14 cm.



Piece of draft for a text on Emilio Pettoruti. [Munich, 1923]. At the back, watecolor by Xul Solar. 11 x 14.4 cm.

1922

In mid-1922 Xul met a young woman named Elena Alberti and was invited to spend vacations at the Kloster Trauntal Kelheim in Bavaria, which had been an ancient Franciscan monastery between 1450 and 1803. Elena was the daughter of the owners of the monastery and of the pension in Munich where Xul was staying. At that time Xul used to get together with Hans Reichel and his wife Olga, and it was probably then that he bought the books on Paul Klee by Leopold Zahn and Wilhem Hausenstein. Works such as *Añoro patria* (I Miss Homeland) and *Chaco* indicate his growing interest in America, an interest which was to accelerate his return. Works such as *Sointi Raimi esponsal* (The Wedding of Sointi Raimi) illustrate the twin line of development in his work: his investigations on the *neocriollo* (neo-Creole, referring to present day Argentina) were complemented by his interest for pre-Columbian myths and beliefs.

On July 7 he told his 'mamas' that he and Pettoruti were returning to Argentina to exhibit their work. His only reference to what was happening in Argentine art was the selection sent to the *XIII Esposizione Internazionalle d'Arte della Città de Venezia*, at which works by artists like Fernando Fader, Cesáreo Bernaldo de Quirós, Luis Cordoviola, and Jorge Bermúdez were the official representatives of the country's art. The paintings were pictorial descriptions of landscapes and people from the interior of the country: faithful in copying and adapting techniques derived from impressionism, with thick brushstrokes being the most common denominator in the work. Pettoruti, who had visited the Biennial, on discovering the backwardness of the artists from Argentina, called the Argentine selection a *mamarracho* (rubbish). This stimulated Xul and Pettoruti to make a greater 'splash' in Buenos Aires.

1923

While Pettoruti was preparing his exhibit at Berlin's Der Sturm Gallery, directed by Herwarth Walden, Xul was writing a prologue for the show's catalog. It was the first of three texts that he was to write for his friend that year. Finally, Alberto M. Candioti, a diplomat who was active in Berlin's Hispanic American Cultural Association, wrote the prologue for the Der Sturm show.

Xul went to Stuttgart and informed his 'mamas' on March 29 that he had gone there "to study a certain issue in a series of pedagogical lectures". He referred to several of the nine lectures given by Rudolf Steiner between March 25 and March 30. He attended "The Anthroposophical Movement" and "The Anthroposophical Society", talks dedicated to followers of anthroposophy, another two titled "Education and Art" and "The Moral Life", and a third, "The Uttering of Syllables and Speaking Words".

In December *La Razón*, the same newspaper that had published a negative review on Pettoruti's work two years earlier, now decided to print an article by Xul titled "Pettoruti and His Disconcerting Futurism", signed with a pseudonym, J. Ramón. Xul utilized a language that could be understood by people who were far removed from these renovating expressions of art and who understood little about the topic. Instead of assuming a negative posture, however, Xul adopted an understanding attitude. In placing himself in the shoes of the neophyte viewer, Xul recognized that Pettoruti "has been, perhaps, the only deserter in the artistic caravan that Latin American countries send to Europe, almost without exception, to annihilate the personality of a new race with ancestral visions." His article, which should be taken as a fortuitous 'infiltration' in the newspaper, marks one of the highest points of the strategy envisioned that year by the two artists, whose sights were now set on their next

I Ging das Buch der Wandlungen. Drittes Buch. Aus dem Chinesischen Verdeutscht und Erläutert von Richard Wilhelm. Jena: Verlegt bei Eugen Diederichs, 1924.

exhibition in Buenos Aires.
The works that Xul prepared that year allow us to see the different orientations he followed. As to the content of his works, themes related to pre-Columbian myths and beliefs coexisted with topics related to inner visions and also the recreation of a Norwegian-Icelandic comsogony.

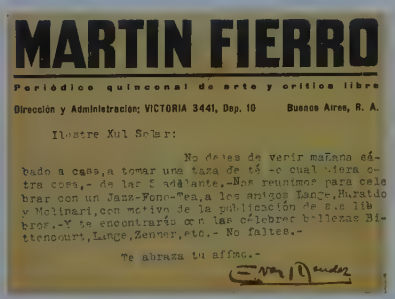
1924

Xul arrived in Paris at the end of April, after spending several months in Zoagli. Nina Hamnet set up a meeting with Aleister Crowley. Xul ended up living for a month with Crowley and Alostrael, (Leah Hirsig), who recorded that and other meetings in her dairy, *The Magical Record of the Scarlet Woman*. It was then that he had his first systematized visions, which he would then transcribe in notebooks, where he also recorded Crowley's observations.
He took part in the *Exposition d'Art Américain-Latin* (Exhibition of Latin American Art) at the Galliéra Museum in Paris, at which a number of Argentine artists were represented: Pettoruti, Pablo Curatella Manes, Gavazzo Buchardo, Alfredo Guido, Horacio Butler. Brazilian artists Victor Becheret and Anita Malfatti, who presented *Etudiante russe* (Russian Student) and *l'Américaine* (American), and Uruguayan artists Milo Beretta, Carlos A. Castellanos, Pedro Figari, etc. were also included.
The Paris correspondent of *La Razón* wrote of the coming exhibition of his works in Buenos Aires and affirmed:

> *This painter continues, above all else, to make paintings within expressionism, and to that effect he enlists poetry as well as Oriental and American mythologies. He does not translate the objects, but rather, one could almost say, points them out in sign language. "In the end," he told me, "why not do it that way? We live in an age of the profusion of advertising, of signs, of registers. Why not then transport that characteristic to the canvas?"*

He traveled from Paris to Hamburg, and together with Pettoruti, boarded the steamship *Vigo*, bound for Buenos Aires. Xul carried the books he acquired during his stay in Germany with him. He had works by: Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner, works dedicated to Picasso, Marc Chagall, Alexander Archipenko, Klee, Franz Marc, Max Pechstein, and Oscar Kokoscha. He also had works on Islam, the Aztec and Inca Empires, primitive art, philosophy, and the cabala.
On his arrival at Buenos Aires, he found that the urban profile of the city had changed notably in his twelve-year absence. Regarding culture, different groups were attempting to bring the city's sense of esthetics up to date.
In spite of their decision to exhibit together, Pettoruti held an individual show of his recent work at the Witcomb Gallery. Xul wrote about Pettoruti in *Martín Fierro* (1924-1927), publishing an article that is a reduced version of a previous one. As the driving force behind the neo-Creole avant-garde, Xul described the works of his friend as obvious examples of an art that was destined to take root in America in a not-too-distant future. Xul and Pettoruti were operating at the margin of the "law" and would not tolerate the frivolity that predominated in the expression of local art. Referring to paintings like *Landscape at High Speed,* Xul was able to explain the concepts of "pure plasticity in art" and of abstraction. In others, like *The Park*, he could recognize a "landscape pregnant with Poetry" in which "subtleties exasperate, explode with light, while forms deform, spinning in a kaleidoscope fashion". Even in works in which Pettoruti "tolerated" the principles he now denied, the arabesques in the forms that free the work from "reality's cage" could be appreciated, launching the work onto a metaphysical plane.
Xul participated in the Primer Salón Libre (First Free Salon) toward the end of that year with Gavazzo Buchardo, an old friend from

Evar Méndez [Evaristo González]. Post card to Alejandro Xul Solar. [Buenos Aires, December 1927], typed in blue ink, autograph in black ink, 10.5 x 13.2 cm.


MARTIN FIERRO

Periódico quincenal de arte y crítica libre

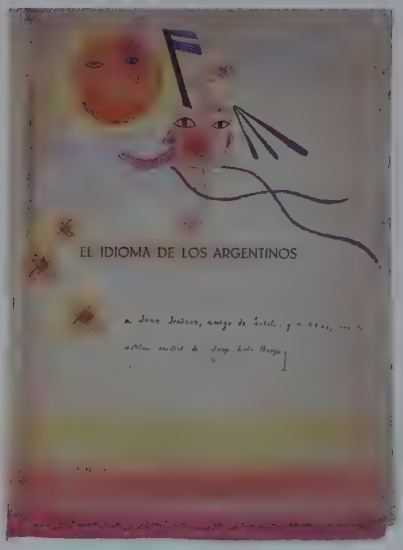
Dirección y Administración: VICTORIA 3441, Dep. 10 Buenos Aires, R. A.

Ilustre Xul Solar:

No deseas de venir mañana sábado a casa, a tomar una taza de té -o cual quiera otra cosa,- de las 5 adelante.-Nos reunimos para celebrar con un Jazz-Fono-Tea, a los amigos Lange, Buratto y Molinari, con motivo de la publicación de sus libros.-Y te encontrarás con las célebres bellezas Bittencourt, Lange, Zenner, etc.- No faltes.-

Te abraza tu affmo.-

Evar Méndez



Jorge L. Borges. El idioma de los argentinos. Buenos Aires: [n.p.], 1928. Copy with a dedication by the author, in black ink: "To Juan Iraizuz [i.e. "Irazú"], friend of trees and books, with the kind affection of Jorge Luis Borges". Bound in vellum, painted oil cover and inside decorations in watercolor by Alejandro Xul Solar; endleaf painted by the artist.

París. From that moment until 1927, his personal strategy led him to participate in these small salons that were being promoted as alternatives to the official Salon. They were spaces where anyone could show and where his small watercolors could be hung without being rejected by juries.

1925

Xul's father died in April and he debated whether to return to Europe, where he had peers with whom he could share his ideas and continue his apprenticeship, or to stay in Argentina. The Latin Americanist project that had nourished him in the early years of the decade began to lose its appeal. The theme that had convinced him to return to Argentina and had caused him to intensify his work related to 'neo-Creole' as a language common to all the peoples of Iberian America was no longer a driving priority. He had found himself in an environment that was incapable of stimulating him, one where he could not develop his different interests sufficiently. The reduced number of works that he made that year produced the sensation that he was facing an impasse in his production. Nevertheless, watercolors like *Saint Dance, World, Pupo* (Pupo), *National Holiday* all counter any negative reading of his work in that period, with his profound portrayal of cities, sacred dances, and integrating visions for the world and for America.

Jorge Luis Borges became an efficient sounding board for Xul, and in June in his essay "El idioma infinito" (The Infinite Language), he expressed his regard for his friend. "I dedicate these notes to the great Xul Solar, since in the formulation of them he is not clean of guilt". Borges' essay referred to one of the diverse interests that they shared: language, in addition, of course, to I Ching and the cabala, mystical poets like William Blake and Emanuel Swedenborg, the Celtic legends, and the *Elder Edda*, among the many other things that during the coming years would bind them closely together. Xul prepared a poster for *Proa* magazine. At the same time, his participation in *Martín Fierro* became recognized when he appeared as an official member of the graphics staff and also in charge of "local and general art criticism and new authors", together with Alberto Prebisch, Pettoruti, and Sandro Piantanida in the publication's "Project under Study".

In September he went back to his visions in a more sure and systematic way. He proposed integrating them into a book he planned to call *San Signos* (Saint Signs). He would include a selection of his visions that he would "rewrite" taking into account chronological organization, selection, and arrangement. Xul continued working with this project during the coming decade, until he completed the 64 hexagrams of the I Ching.

1926

In June Filippo T. Marinetti arrived in Buenos Aires and the Amigos del Arte Association organized the *Exposición de Pintores Modernos* (Exhibition of Modern Painters) to coincide with his lectures. In addition to Xul, Norah Borges, Emilio Pettoruti, and Piero Illari participated in the show. Not only was it the first exhibit to present a group of artists related to *Martín Fierro* who were all committed to the project of esthetic renovation, but it also affirmed the intention to prove that the avant-garde had finally reached Buenos Aires.

This was the first time that his paintings were exhibited in a fitting visual context that, at the same time, exposed the public to the diversity of his interests and his varied forms of expression. That year he prepared a series of small vignettes to illustrate Borges' *El tamaño de mi esperanza* (The Size of My Hope).

1927

In January Xul wrote his friend Johannes Siemsen:

Several days ago I was taken to "las Islas" (the

Amigos del Arte Association. Post card with a reproduction of Diamujer [Ña diáfana] (Daywoman [Diaphanous Lady]). Buenos Aires, 1929, 13.8 x 8.5 cm.

• Diamujer •.
Xul Solar.
Pintor argentino contemporáneo.

Islands) in front of San Fernando, a city where I entered the country on being born. It is a labyrinth of streams, canals, rivers and alluvial deposits that go rising and little by little are populated and planted in trees. Fifty years ago they were clumps of rushes with no other vegetation in swamps that extended as far as the eye could see. Now each acre produces thousands of pesos and all the region is a jungle of fruit trees and firewood and vegetables. This alluvial system extends up the Paraná River to the Chaco. It may become the richest part of Argentina in the future. What impresses me is to see the land grow, adding banks of pure mud and sand to the coastline, covered with ***carpinchos*** *(capybaras), jaguars, and crocodiles, uninhabitable because of the mosquitoes and bugs and the little space where one can stand. These new countries are being created and it reminds me of the Egyptian delta and ancient Chaldea. It is the work of a hundred or so gringos (Italian immigrants), who arrived here anxious to make money, our founding heroes. On the islands upstream, in Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, there are no gringos, just Creoles and a few Indians that live from fishing or hunting. They do not cultivate. One of them made a wall around his place with* ***yacarés*** *(crocodiles) nailed onto the ground, and, of course, it really stank. What wasn't worth pennies before, now near the Plate, is worth 1.000 pesos a hectare.*

In a search that led him to experiment constantly, Xul adopted the duodecimal system of numeration, considering it to be superior to the decimal system in both practicality and agility. He also began an activity that would continue during all of the coming decade: translating. He translated "Algunos piensos cortos" (Some Short Thoughts) by Christian Morgenstern, taken from his book *Stufen,* for *Martín Fierro*. Soon after, *Martín Fierro* announced a translation of "Pensamientos de Novalis" (The Thoughts of Novalis) for its coming issue, probably extracted from his *Werke* (Work), a book that Xul had brought with him from Germany, but this piece was never published.

In October he participated in the *Exposición Feria 6* (Exhibition Fair 6) at the Boliche de Arte, directed by Leonardo Estarico, exhibiting together with Pettoruti, Ballester Peña, Gómez Cornet, Del Prete, González Roberts, Sibellino, Forner, Tapia, Guttero, Giambiagi and Pissarro. The catalog had a prologue by Atalaya, the first Argentine art critic to recognize the originality and the exceptional qualities of Xul's work.

1928

Through the contacts established by the "new generation of Argentine art" with Brazilian modernism and, in particular, with Mário de Andrade, the Cataguases Group from Minas Geraes, formed by Rosário Fusco, Henrique de Resende and Ascanio Lopes, contacted Norah Borges, María Clemencia Pombo, Xul, and Uruguayan Idelfonso Pereda Valdés. Verde magazine registered the group's activities, among them an exhibit in Montevideo.

Through this new contact, António de Alcántara Machado, who directed in his "Primeira Dentiçao" (First Teething), the *Revista de Antropofagia* sent an invitation to Xul to participate, since "*in view of showing the new work of America in Brazil, the question was raised of including your name among the other participants that I have already listed. Antropófaga has no color or no preferences: it eats anything as long as it is good.*" [3] With appropriate dedications, Xul received Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* , Oswald de Andrade's *Os romances do exilio* (Romances from Exile), II (II), and *A Estrella de Absyntho* (Star of Absinthe), and a joint book of poetry by Fusco, Resende, and Lopes, *Poemas cronológicos* (Chronological Poems).

Borges published *El idioma de los argentinos* (The Language of the Argentines) with illustrations by Xul.

Xul continued to maintain his contact with Elena Alberti (Yoliffe) by mail. She sent him words of encouragement from Munich, where she tried to develop interest in his work. She took a special interest in *Libro del Cielo* (The Book of Heaven) and, to a lesser degree, *San Signos* (Saint Signs). Toward the end of the year, she wrote to him, saying:

I am in contact with one of the most famous painters of the Neue Sezession from here in Munich, Professor Lichtenberger, now an older man who likes modern painting very much and who wants to get Reichel's paintings exhibited in the Neue Sezession show this year. He is a member of the Jury. Before, the Neue

Signo. Buenos Aires, no 32, 1933. Director: Leonardo Estárico.

[Alejandro Xul Solar, translator]. Rudyard Kipling. Just so stories for little children. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1903. "El principio de los tatús" (The origin of the giant armadillo) Crítica. Revista Multicolor de los Sábados. Buenos Aires, no. 60, September 29, 1943 : 3

Alejandro Xul Solar. Cover for Des Prophètes à Jésus. Le monde juif vers le temps de Jésus by Ch. Guignebert. Paris, La Renaissance du Livre, 1935.

Sezession showed some interest in Klee, without accepting him entirely. Professor Lichtenberger in very interested in your painting and wants to organize a show next year with works by you and Reichel [...].

1929

Five years after returning to Argentina, Xul opened his first individual show in the Amigos del Arte space. He presented 62 works that covered his varied production of recent years: angels and fauns, images of cities and countries, "*décoras*", sceneries, and various paintings from the pre-Columbian "cycle". That year the same Association produced a series of postcards, which included at least two works by Xul: *Diamujer* (*Ña diáfana*) (Daywoman-Diaphanous Lady) and *Juzgue* (Do Judge).

In 1929 Xul began his career as an instructor at the Keppler Lodge, one of the six Rosicrucian lodges in Argentina. This number indicates the importance that the Ancient Mystic Order Rosae Crucis had in South America, where it had first been founded by Arnold Krum-Heller. Xul also received *Rosa-Cruz. Revista mensual de ciencia Rosa-Cruz y estudios afines* (Berlin, 1929-1931) (Rosae Crucis: a monthly magazine of Rosae Crucis science and related studies).

In a new strategy to reach the public that he was to return to in the 1950s, he opted to making himself known through interviews in different publications. In the *Almanaque de la Mujer* (The Woman's Almanac), where Norah Borges and Silvina Ocampo were contributors, an anonymous reporter marveled at Xul's personality, as he translated Celtic legends for her. In *La Nación*, Ernesto M. Barreda found a "chaotic" beauty in his paintings, a "catástrophe of colors and planes". Several of Xul's watercolors made him think of a "clown in a costume of mismatched colors being dismembered and destroyed by a naughty child". The writer was taken by surprise by a man who proposed to reform our way of writing music, who invented a new language and a new way of writing. One could find "the most curious shorthand" of "undulating squiggles, geometric intrusions, and fine tentacles" in his writings.

He participated in the *Nuevo Salón* (New Salon), an exhibition organized by Guttero at the Amigos del Arte space that would later travel to Rosario and La Plata. The show combined a new avant-garde that confronted the public with the diverse proposals of "modern painters" including Xul Solar and Carlos Giambiagi, Gómez Cornet and Butler, Forner and Figari, Borges and Victorica. In the following years, Xul would take part in each of Guttero's projects, whether in Buenos Aires, at the Amigos de Arte space (1929-1931), or in Montevideo (1931). The annual show was given the title: *Salón de Pintores Modernos* (Salon of Modern Painters). The initiative was to survive throughout most of the 1930's.

1931-1932

Azul magazine published Xul's "Apuntes de neocrillo" (Notes on Neo-Creole), a strange title for one of his visions dated II December 1925 12_h", while another vision appeared in the only issue of *Imán*, published in Paris by Elvira de Alvear.

In his character as Director of the Provincial Museum of Fine Arts of La Plata, Pettoruti invited Xul to exhibit his works. The show, scheduled for October, was never held. A year later, the Museum was reopened in a space at the Pasaje Dardo Rocha. In 1932, the Provincial Commission of Fine Arts organized the *Salón de Arte del Cincuentenario* (Salon of Art for the Fiftieth Anniversary). It was decided not to offer prizes, but rather to acquire artwork to increase the Museum's patrimony. On that occasion, the Museum Commission bought *Bria Palace*.

1933

The Agrupación de Artistas Signo (the Sign Group of Artists), under the direction of Estarico, organized an exhibit called *El violín de Ingres* (Ingres' Violin) in which "artists compose sonnets and writers paint a picture". The paintings of Nicolás Olivari, Alfonsina Storni, Jorge Luis Borges, Ulises Petit de Murat, Norah Lange, Raúl González Tuñón, and Leonidas Barletta were exhibited in the Salon of the Castelar Hotel, the headquarters of Signo. In the catalog, the fortnightly publication of the group, "Poema" (Poem), a vision of Xul's, is reproduced:

It is a fluid Hades, almost steam, skyless, without soil, golden in color to eyes closed under the sun, agitated within a storm, vortices, waves, and froth. In its lumps and foam, not

a multitude of men float passively, they untwinkle, there are also men alone, elderly, fishlike, and shine gently.

The second issue of the *Revista Multicolor de los Sábados* (1933-1934) of the daily newspaper *Crítica* published Xul's "Cuentos del Amazonas, de los Mosetenes y Guaruyús. Primeras historias que se oyeron en este continente" (Tales of the Amazon, of the Mosetenes and the Guaruyús. The first stories to be heard on this continent). It was Xul's first contribution to the magazine directed by Jorge Luis Borges and Ulises Petit de Murat.
Xul participated in the *Salón de Arte del Cincuentenario* (Fiftieth Anniversary Art Salon) in La Plata, as he continued to do in coming years.

1934

Between January and September he translated several stories, taken from the *Just So Stories for Little Children* by Rudyard Kipling, for the *Revista Multicolor de los Sábados*. Xul used Borges' copy of Kipling, and the illustrated pages were torn out and given to the printer for reproduction. The following year, he translated news articles from the press in the United States for *Crítica. La revista para los hogares argentinos* Under the pseudonym "Fulano de tal" (So and So), he published a review on Harold Lamb's book *Genghis Khan, Emperador de todos los hombres* (Ghengis Khan, Emperor of All Men).

1935-1936

Xul continued closely involved in the activities of his friend Borges, particularly in those that concerned translation. Borges chose a story by May Sinclair for *El Hogar* that Xul was asked to translate.
In October the first issue of *Destiempo* (Out of Step) (1936-1937) appeared. The publication was under the direction of Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares. Xul contributed vignettes and then his "Vision sobre el Trilíneo" (Vision about the Trilíneo) and a "Glosa" (Commentary). The latter, as he explained, was destined to be "an exercise in criol". Just as he had done years before with his "Apuntes de neocriollo" (Notes on Neo-Creole), to a vision transcribed in the new language, he added the respective commentary. Nevertheless, over the last five years, the "*futur lenguo del Continente*" (future language of the Continent) continued to evolve. There were changes and modifications that provided a greater richness as well as a greater complexity. Xul, as a novelty and under his own signature, was the only contributor to *Destiempo* that listed his telephone number between parenthesis marks. This act indicated his interest in contacting others that could share his searches.
Several of his works from this period possessed characteristics that seemed to march in a direction opposed to modern technology. At times these works were peopled with beings that, in their hybrid nature, had the capacity to displace themselves through the air. This interest in certain outlandish mechanisms of flight appeared also in his *Vuel villa* (Fly Town), a work done in 1936, that nevertheless is very far from being a "whim" of his imagination, but rather responded to the new needs and requirements of the modern world. He clarified this point many years later in a text in which *Vuel villa* had evolved in its functional mechanisms.

Someone in Buenos Aires had a sketch of a project done many years before, of a city, let us call it a town. It was a town that on any given day could turn up on the horizon. It would appear there between the clouds, somewhere in the air where it had not been the day before. That is to say, a town that floats, moves about, or navigated through the air, a navigates town, a Vuelvilla, which for brevity we will call V.V

Alejandro Xul Solar. Sketches of "vuel villas" (fly towns). [194?]. Pencil on paper, 22 x 13.1 cm.

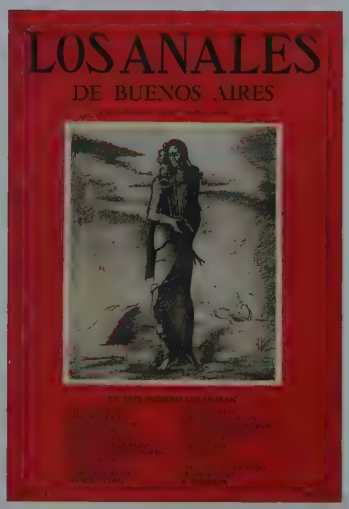
1939

Xul, toward the end of the decade, among the multitude of activities in which he was involved, began to develop a new game, panajedrez (pan-chess). According to what he said in 1947:

Seven or eight years ago. One day I discovered something that was very simple and disconcerting at the same time. It was the need for a game that could be adaptable for use in every corner of the earth. It could be played no just for entertainment —taking for granted that entertainment is no more than a lamentable way to waste time— but putting the greater part of one's knowledge into play, and the very sensitivity of the player, too. It would attempt, simultaneously, to seek, investigate, study, and create, tending always toward perfecting the spirit. [...] I then got the

Alejandro Xul Solar. Panlanguage pack of cards [194?]. Watercolor on cardboard, 7 x 5.5 cm.

Los Anales de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, 1.10, October 1946. Director: Jorge Luis Borges.



idea for panajedrez, with astrological foundations, with a chessboard of 12 squares by 13, according the very simple duodecimal system. The pieces represent stars or signs from the zodiac and are placed in the squares as the game progresses and as seems most adequate to the adversaries.

He translated *El pensamiento vivo de Schopenhauer* (Schopenhauer's Living Thought) by Thomas Mann for Guillermo de Torre, the literary advisor for a publishing house that had just opened the year before, Editorial Losada.

1940

He held his second individual exhibit at Sala II of Amigos del Arte, at the same time that Norah Borges and Silvina Ocampo were exhibiting in the other rooms of the gallery. Ten of the 25 works exhibited were subtitled "Todo escrito" (Everything Written). Among them, his Grafías (Writings) that responded to a new system of visual writing which employed shorthand symbols, were outstanding. He had been working for the last five years on this project, although its origins date back to the late 1920's.

The reception of the work by the local art critics oscillated between two extremes. If for Vincent Horia "la présence de Xul Solar parmi nous pourrait etre interprété comme le symbole de tout ce que nous avons perdu en gagnant la civilisation", "the presence of Xul Solar among us could be interpreted as the symbol of all that we have lost in gaining civilization," for the already influential Jorge Romero Brest, Xul

uses artistic forms –whose structure and signification he consciously dominate, because he knows drawing and is a sensitive colorist– as elements of a very personal language by which he intends to communicate his idea of human existence, related to philosophical finalism. With frank ingenuity, he explains the foundations of his symbol-based system –lineal, in some cases, curved in others– unaware of the fact that esoteric significance overburdens mere signification –vowel or consonant– that he lends to each one of his signs. All of this exceeds the limits of expressive possibilities of painting, and, therefore, of this criticism.

It would take another twenty years for Romero Brest to surpass these limitations.

The beginning of the new decade found Xul more interested in technique and mechanics, and magazines such as *Selecciones Técnicas*, *América Técnica*, *Hobby*, or *Science Digest* were testimony to his growing interest in this field of knowledge. It is also reflected in the large number of newspaper clippings that he filed in folders: airplanes, tanks, and military armaments, plus anything that represented a technological advance.

Xul intensified the practice that he began as a youth with these folders. He kept clippings with reproductions of works of art, as well as articles on national and international politics, portraits of historic personalities or movie stars—which he integrated into his physiognomic studies--urban and pre-urban landscapes from different regions in the world, and new scientific discoveries. He accumulated material incessantly. Each item would lose the original context it had when published to be reorganized into another, more complex one, within Xul's own universe of interests.

As of that year, Xul began to give a number of lectures that were free of charge. The first of these, dedicated to "La Astrología mejor" (The Best Astrology) was given at the Universidad Espiritualista Americana (American Spiritualist University) in Rosario, under the direction of Santiago Bovisio. In the following years, he gave an Elementary Course in Astrology at the same place. It was divided into a series of themes, which included "General Concepts", "Practicing the Horoscope", and "Bhavo Chakro". His home at 1214 Laprida St. was a center for visits of friends and followers, artists and writers including Jorge Calvetti, Adolfo de Obieta, Juan Battle Planas, and Raúl Soldi, among others. Xul generously shared his search, his studies and his knowledge. For Obieta, the house was.

one of the most radiant studios in the secret life of Buenos Aires. Books and illustrations on the human and the divine were accumulated there. Exercises in meditation, concentration and prayer were practiced, as well as studies in the Cabala and the Zohar, Aztec and Maya traditions, and enigmatic testimony from Easter Island. Thousands of horoscopes were examined and compared there. In those solitary gatherings of friendship with the Mystery, each one attempted to take a firm step in the labyrinth or raise a corner of the veil of the unknown.

1944-1948

In those years, Xul did a series of painting, such as *Fjord* (1943). It can be distinguished from the rest of his work by the self-imposed reduction in color, where blacks and ochers of an opaque and ascetic material predominate, heightening the dramatic impact of his visionary landscapes. Xul intensified the way he had been working at the end of the previous decade. He used notebooks for sketches, mostly in graph paper format, where the potential of each page was maximized by vertical and horizontal divisions. Each one of the resulting squares was a space to develop visual notes that were to be the starting point of new paintings.

In 1946, Xul married Lita (Micaela Cadenas, 1902-1988), his disciple, whom he had met in the mid-1930s. She was also a dedicated student of astrology, and she helped him organize and systematize his papers. Lita was a sound interpreter of his *panlengua*, and, later, the caretaker of his legacy.

He did a series of vignettes to illustrate *Los Anales de Buenos Aires* from 1946 to 1948, which was directed by Borges, and also *Un modelo para la muerte* (A Model for Death) in 1946, a book by Borges in conjunction with Adolfo Bioy Casares.

In 1947, Xul started to give interviews again, the first, explaining his work, to *El hombre argentino* magazine. He had returned to that mechanism to reach a broader public more directly. In the coming years and until 1961, other interviews appeared in a variety of publications: *Leoplán*, *Coche a la vista*, *Mundo Argentino*, *Wells* and *El Mundo*, which indicated that he had chosen magazines and newspaper with massive distribution and a more popular orientation.

Adán Buenosayres appeared in 1948, a book in which his author Leopoldo Marechal transposed several personalities of his generation onto the literary plane to recreate them as his characters, among them Xul as Schulzte the Astrologer.

1949

In the middle of July, Xul inaugurated his third individual show in Argentina at the Samos Gallery, recently opened by Alfredo Bonino. *La Nación*, *La Prensa*, *El Mundo*, *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, and *Historium* reviewed the show. Borges wrote the prologue for the exhibit's catalog, and it was also published in *Continente* magazine under the title "Xul Solar y su arte: zodíaco de valores" (Xul Solar and his Art: A Zodiac of Values). Xul renewed his contact with his old friend, Olga Reichel, and told her in a letter:

> *I am still 'hopeful' here, I have advanced a lot in some things. I resolved a number of problems (or inventions); but in terms of finances I have debts and projects, [...] Until now just one good disciple whom I married three years ago. Luckily for her, she is employed independently of me. She is Castilian and distrusts artists and intellectuals a lot. She would like you, because you are lofty and sincere. No kids (physical ones).*

In his role as a linguist dedicated to the study and diffusion of the Guaraní tongue, Xul was invited to participate in the First Congress of the Guaraní-Tupí Language at the School of Humanities and Sciences at the University of Montevideo. He attended the Congress in early 1950. At his suggestion, a topic was added to the list of themes to be presented: "The Tupí-Guaraní voices incorporated into the Spanish and Portuguese languages. Its writing and its writing and phonetics."

1951

Xul presented an individual show with 24 works at the Guión Gallery. He told an interviewer on that occasion:

> *I am the world's champion of a game that no one knows yet: **panajedrez**. I am the teacher of a form of writing that no one can read yet. I am the creator of a technique for writing music that will cut the time needed to learn to play the piano, for example, in a third. I am the director of a theater that still does not function. I am the creator of a universal language, **panlingua**, founded on numerical and astrological bases, which could contribute to getting people to know each other better. I am the creator of twelve pictorial techniques, some in the surrealist style and others that transport to the canvas the emotional, sensorial world produced on hearing a suite by Chopin, a prelude of Wagner, or a vocalized strophe sang by Beniamino Gigli. I am, and this is what interests me most at this moment –besides the exhibition of paintings that I am*

Alejandro Xul Solar. Pan tree. 1953. Printed, hand colored. In: Pinties y dibujos. A. Xul Solar. Room V, Van Riel. Buenos Aires, 1953.

preparing– the creator of a language that the world of Latin America clamors for with insistence.

For Xul, world politics was a decisive point to keep in mind and his creations were in tone with the major blocks into which the world was divided after the Second World War: *Panamérica*, *Paneuropa* and *Panasia*. In that manner, just as neo-Creole sought a greater integration between countries of Latin America, *panlengua* sought to be "the complementary language for the three blocks".

1952

During Juan D. Perón's presidency and in the framework of his Second Five Year Plan, the *Exposición de la Pintura y Escultura Argentinas de este Siglo* (Exhibition of Argentine Painting and Sculpture of This Century) was organized and Xul was invited to participate. The exhibition, a cross-section of the preceding fifty years of Argentine art, included 271 artists with 519 works. Macedonio Fernández died that year. The author of *Papeles de recienvenido* (The Papers of a Newcomer) (1929) had been a close friend of Xul's since the 1920's.

1953-1954

The intense public activity that Xul developed in those years contrasted sharply with that of the two decades following his return from Europe: three individual exhibitions in just five years, between 1949 and 1953. The last of these was held in the renowned Sala V (Room 5) of the Van Riel Gallery, where he presented 37 works. Eleven of them were small oils on glass, in oblong shapes.
In his prologue for the show, titled "Explica" (Explanation), Xul, for the first time, voiced a judgment on contemporary art. He established a "theor-system" in his text that involved the cabala, the duodecimal numeration system, astrology, and *panlengua*, by which he sought to establish a new cosmic order.
He continued investigations that covered –among many others– a practical modification of the keyboard of the piano and *panlengua*.
He advanced in developing a puppet theater for adults. The plays that were to be presented were to have a religious, mystical, or poetic sense, with characters he calls "of an astrological type". His last wish was "to be able to ordain the instruments of a single culture, always using Astrology as its base, in the sense that we might call cabalistic, and simplify the study of the arts in order,to make it available to everyone with a sense of creativity." What Xul was looking for was to universalize knowledge, the only way, he felt, to reach a brotherhood among men "without distinction of race or creed."
In 1954 he bought a house in Tigre. He plunged into architectural design and began to draw projects for houses in the Delta, for which he revived and updated the construction methods used traditionally in the Tigre: houses elevated on tall piles. He also, at the same time, designed projects for cities and plazas.

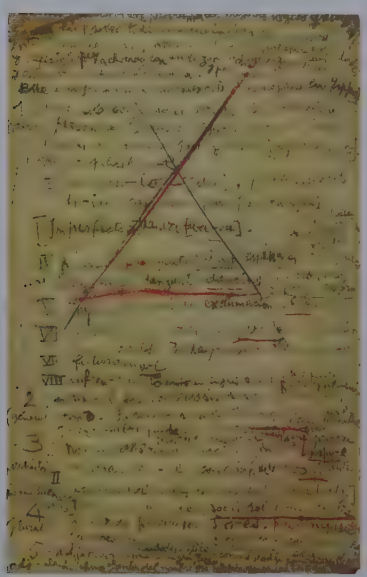
1957-1958

The Rubbers Gallery initiated its activity with an inaugural exhibition titled *Pintura mágica* (Magical Painting), which included works by Xul, Norah Borges, Juan Battle Planas and Lino Enea Spilimbergo.
During those years and the succeeding ones, his visits to the Delta lasted longer and longer. There, in isolation, he sought to finalize some of his projects and Lita became an intermediary between him and the city. Three articles that revealed to readers more of his facets and the multiplicity of his interests, methods of investigation and areas of work were published in that period. They were "*Autómatas en la historia chica*" (Automatons in a Minor History), "*Propuestas para más vida futura*" (Proposals for More Future Life), and "*Una vieja forma de publicidad, el 'Potlach'*" (An Old Form of Publicity, the 'Potlach'). The themes treated in two of the texts referred to the history of science and technology. In the second, Xul developed a theory regarding the capacity to vary and modify, that is to say, to improve the human organism.
When asked by a friend why he did not publish his 'panchess', he responded that he did not want to "publish it until the language whose dictionary is its chessboard, were perfect, and could be corrected no more. It is already well advanced, many specific works of everyday use are still missing, although the basic design is solid and now seems perfectly logical."

1962

He gave a lecture on language at the Graphic and Sound Division of the General Archives of the Nation. It was a critical exposition in which

Alejando Xul Solar. Draft for his lecture on language at the General Archives of the Nation, 1962.



Alejandro Xul Solar. Micaela Cadenas de Xul Solar and friends. Tigre, September 11, 1960. Period copy, silver gel, 6 x 6.6 cm.

Xul summarized the state of one of his investigations into a perfect language, while at the same time proposing a program of "logical and viable improvements" for Spanish. Osvaldo Svanascini approached Jorge Romero Brest, the director of the National Museum of Fine Arts, with the idea of organizing an exhibition of Xul's work. The project was approved and preparations for the show were initiated.

1963

Xul died at 75 on April 9 in his home in Tigre. Several days later an exhibition of his work opened at Rioboo Gallery with 44 paintings that covered his production of 1961-1962. This previously prepared posthumous exhibit was presented by Svanascini, its curator:

> *From Liang K'ai or Mu K'y until [Mark] Tobey, calligraphic painting has restructured a system of ideographic communication with relative autonomy, in which its subjective possibilities permit a certain elasticity, some room for chance. Xul Solar approaches the technique, the invention, the ethical stance, as a creative way to incorporate himself into existence. Nevertheless, that existence alluded to by Xul attempts to conjugate elements of exceptional imagerial value. Xul moves among them with absolute and disturbing naturalness, attributing it all to the virtue of logic. Xul's calligraphic works are suspended in lined spaces with low horizons, in terraced planes, perhaps in predictable mystical dimensions. None of us has been able to communicate in such a generous manner. But all of this interconnection, organized through a variety of writings that could be cursive, geometrical, syllabic, gesticulated, vegetable, animal, or in a heraldic manner—as he succeeded in grouping them--is conceived to stimulate virtue, in the manner of the teachings of a bodhisattva with a very special sense of humor, and in order to provoke a symbiosis between reality, the permanent, the metaphysical, the ingenuous, the poetic, the dreamlike, the unsuspected, the ultra-earthly, the exalted day to day, the magical, and the divine.*

The National Museum of Fine Arts opened *Homenaje a Xul Solar* (Tribute to Xul Solar), the exhibition curated by Svanascini. The exhibit was the most important of Xul's work to date: 93 paintings covering the period from 1915 to 1962. Simultaneously, Svanascini presented the first audio-visual dedicated to the artist: *La obra de Xul Solar* (The Work of Xul Solar).
During the rest of the 1960's, exhibitions and tributes were held at galleries and museums. His work began to be associated with surrealism and it was incorporated into exhibits such as

Jorge López Anaya and Jorge Luis Borges (to the right, behind the writer, Micaela Cadenas de Schulz Solari). Opening of the Exposición Homenaje a Xul Solar. (Tribute to Xul Solar Exhibition). Provincial Museum of Fine Arts of La Plata, July 17, 1968.

Surrealismo Imaginación (Surrealism Imagination) in 1964, *Magia e imaginación en la pintura* (Magic and Imagination in Painting) in 1965, *Exposicion Homenaje a J. Battle Planas* (Tribute to J. Battle Planas tributes) also in 1965, and the most important of all, *Surrealism en la Argentina* (Surrealism in Argentina) in 1967, at the Torcuato Di Tella Institute's Center for Visual Arts.

Xul was represented at the *3ª Bienal Americana de Arte* (Third American Biennial of Art), organized by Industrias Kaiser Argentina in 1966 in Cordoba, by the *Exposición Homenaje a Xul Solar* (Tribute to Xul Solar Exhibition). The show was accompanied by a catalog containing a text by Aldo Pellegrini, the art critic that had situated Xul at the head of the surrealist movement in Argentina, calling him "an independent creator and pioneer." In addition to the presence of Xul's work, the Biennial held an International Award Show for Painting, whose guest of honor was Jesús Soto, and also sponsored the Seminar for Experimental Music.

In 1968, the Provincial Museum of Fine Arts of La Plata prepared another tribute. Curated by Jorge López Anaya, 80 works were presented. Jorge Luis Borges gave a long lecture on Xul, calling him a "citizen of the universe."

The following decades have consolidated the affirmation and appreciation that his work has received in Argentina and abroad. Knowing Xul's work has become an obligation for all those who dedicate themselves to the study of Argentine art.

EXHIBITIONS

A. Individual exhibitions

Settima Esposizione. Mostra Personale dello Scultore Arturo Martini e del Pittore Alessandro Xul Solari. Arte Gallery. Milan, November 27 through December 16, 1920.

Exposición Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte, May 1929.

Exposición Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte, July 1940.

A. Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Samos Gallery, July 18 through August 2, 1949.

[Alejandro Xul Solar]. Buenos Aires. Guión Gallery, September 3 - 15, 1951.

Pinties y Dibujos. A. Xul Solar. Buenos Aries, Van Riel Gallery, Room V, September 22 through October 7, 1953.

B. Group exhibitions

Exposition d'Art Américain-Latin organisée para La Maison de l'Amérique Latine et l'Académie International des Beaux-Arts. Paris. Galliéra Museum, March 15 through April 15, 1924.

Primer Salón Libre. Buenos Aries, Witcomb Gallery, December 10-24, 1924.

Primer Salón de Artistas Independientes. Buenos Aires, National Commission of Fine Arts, November 1925.

Exposición de Pintores Modernos. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte, June 1926.

Exposición de Pintura y Escultura. Buenos Aires."La Peña". Tortoni Café, June 14 – 28, 1926.

Primera Exposición Permanente de Arte Argentino. Buenos Aires. Florida Salon, 1927.

Gran Feria de la Pintura Joven. Buenos Aires. Boliche de Arte, October 26 through November 10, 1927.

2ª Exposición de Pintura y Escultura bajo los auspicios del Ateneo Popular de La Boca. Buenos Aires, "Unión de la Boca" Society, 1928.

Nuevo Salón. Año Primero. Buenos Aires, Amigos del Arte, September 1929. (Traveling exhibition: Rosario. Municipal Commission of Fine Arts, 1929; La Plata, Arts Association. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts, 1929 – 1930)

Salón de Pintores y Escultores Modernos. Buenos Aires, Amigos del Arte, October 1930.

Primer Grupo Argentino de Pintores Modernos. Montevideo, Centennial Salon, May, 1931.

Salón de Pintores Modernos. Buenos Aires, Amigos del Arte, September, 1931.

[Exposición de Pintura]. Buenos Aires, "Signo" Group, Castelar Hotel, June 15 – 30, 1932.

Salón de Arte del Cincuentenario de La Plata. La Plata, Provincial Commission of Fine Arts. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts, November 14 – 30, 1932.

Salón de Pintores y Escultores Modernos. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte, May 1933.

Exposición Feria Mar del Plata. Gran Exposición de Arte. Salón de Dibujos, Acuarelas, Grabados. Mar del Plata, Amigos del Arte Association (Org.), January 18 through February 1, 1934.

Segundo Salón de Arte de La Plata. La Plata, Provincial Commission of Fine Arts, 1934.

Salón de Pintores Modernos. Buenos Aires, Amigos del Arte, May 1934.

Flores en Florida. Buenos Aires, Amigos del Arte, 1935.

Salón de Pintores Modernos. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte Association, May 1935.

Salón de Pintura organizado en honor de los Delegados al Congreso Internacional de los P.E.N. Clubs. Buenos Aires. Amigos del Arte, 1936.

Quinto Salón de Arte de La Plata. La Plata, Provincial Commission of Fine Arts, June 1 through July 1, 1937.

Exposición de dibujos y grabados de 34 artistas argentinos. Bajo los auspicios del Instituto Cultural Argentino-Colombiano-Ecuatoriano-Venezolano. Bogotá. Exhibition Room, Colón Theater. National Direction of Fine Arts, May 25 – June 10, 1939.

Martín Fierro. Periódico quincenal de arte y crítica libre. XXVI Aniversario. 1925-1949. Buenos Aires. SADE, 1939.

Salón de Navidad 1951. Buenos Aires. Bonino Gallery, 1951.

Feria Navidad – Año Nuevo – Reyes. Buenos Aires, Van Riel Gallery, Room V, December, 1952.

Pintores Argentinos contemporáneos. Buenos Aries. Krayd Art Gallery, November 1952.

Exposición de la Pintura y la Escultura Argentinas de este Siglo. Buenos Aires, National Museum of Fine Arts, October 30, 1952 through March 29, 1953.

Pintura Mágica. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, June 1957.

150 Años de Arte Argentino. Buenos Aires, National Museum of Fine Arts, 1960.

Arte Argentina Contemporanêa. Auspiciado pela Embaixada da Republica Argentina no Brasil.

Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, July 1961.

Art Argentine Actuel. Paris. The National Museum of Modern Art, 1962.

C. Posthumous exhibitions
Individual shows

Xul Solar. Óleos. Buenos Aires. Riobóo. Art Gallery, April 22 through May 4, 1963.

Homenaje a Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. National Museum of Fine Arts, October 1963.

Homenaje a Xul Solar. Acuarelas, témperas, óleos. Buenos Aires. Candilejas Gallery, May 3 – 31, 1965.

Exposición Homenaje a Xul Solar presentada por Jorge L. Borges. Buenos Aires, Diálogos Gallery, August 2 – 22, 1965.

Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Proar, August 23 through September 11, 1965.

III Bienal Americana de Arte. Exposición Homenaje a Xul Solar. Córdoba. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts Emilio Caraffa, October 1966.

Xul Solar. Obras 1915/1962. Santa Fe. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts "Rosa Galisteo de Rodríguez", November 1967.

Homenaje a Xul Solar. La Plata. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts, July 17 through August 11, 1968.

Xul Solar/ Pinturas. Buenos Aires, Javier Art Gallery, June 3 - 14, 1969.

Xul Solar. Retrospectiva. Obras 1915 – 1962. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, May 19 through June 16, 1970.

Xul Solar. Acuarelas y Témperas. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, May 1975.

Xul Solar. 1887/1963. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, May 1976.

Xul Solar. 1887 - 1963. Paris, The Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, October 20 through November 27, 1977.

Xul Solar (1887-1963) Oeuvres de 1915 à 1962. Paris, Grand Palais. Rubbers Gallery, FIAC 78, Art Contemporain, October 20 – 29, 1978.

Xul Solar. Obras 1920 – 1962. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, May 17 through June 6, 1979.

Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, April – May 1980.

Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, May 13 through June 1, 1982.

Xul Solar 1887 – 1963. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, April – May 1984.

Xul Solar Témperas/Acuarelas. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, April – May 1985.

Xul Solar. Exposición en ocasión de la reunión del ICOM. Buenos Aires, CAyC, 1986.

Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, May 1987.

Alejandro Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). Buenos Aires, Kramer Gallery together with Rubbers Gallery, August 8 – 20, 1988.

Xul Solar. 1887 – 1963. Grafías. La vista al acecho. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, May 29 through June 17, 1989.

Xul Solar. Catálogo de las obras del Museo. Buenos Aires, Pan Klub Foundation – Xul Solar Museum, 1990.

Alejandro Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). Maldonado – Uruguay. The Museum of American Art, Maldonado, January 20 through February 3, 1990.

Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). Obras Inéditas. Buenos Aries. Rubbers Gallery, June 26 through July 24, 1990.

Alejandro Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). New York, Rachel Adler Gallery, May 2 through June 8, 1991.

Oscar Alejandro Agustín Schulz Solari. Xul Solar 1887 – 1963. Madrid, Guillermo de Osma Gallery, February 13 through April 3, 1993.

Xul Solar. A Collector's Vision. New York, Rachel Adler Gallery, May 1 through June 30, 1993.

Xul Solar: the Architectures. London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, 1994.

Xul Solar – J. L. Borges. Língua e Imagem. Rio de Janeiro. Banco do Brasil Cultural Center, October 2 through January 11, 1997. (São Paulo. Latin American Memorial Foundation, January 23 through March 1, 1998).

Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). I Bienal de Artes Visuales del Mercosur. Porto Alegre. Brasil. Buenos Aires. Banco Patricios Foundation, July 31 through August 23, 1997.

Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). I Bienal de Artes Visuais do Mercosul. Porto Alegre. Biennial of Visual Arts of Mercosur Foundation, October 2 through November 30, 1997.

Xul Solar. El sol herido. Malaga. Episcopal Palace, June 5 through July 5, 1998 (Seville, Andalusian Center for Contemporary Art, July – August, 1998)

Xul Solar (1887 – 1963). Works 1916-1963. Ministry of Foreign Relations, International Commerce and Worship, Argentina. Stockholm. Moderna Musset, May – August 1998.

Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. National Museum of Fine Arts, September 1998.

Paul Klee invita a Xul Solar en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Buenos Aires, National Museum of Fine Arts, 1999.

Xul Solar. Madrid, The Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Center. February 26 through May 13, 2002.

Xul Solar. Buenos Aires. Rubbers Gallery, April 2 – 30, 2002.

D. Posthumous exhibitions
Group Shows

Surrealismo Imaginación. Buenos Aires, Serra Gallery, September 23 through October 23, 1964.

Exposición homenaje a Ignacio Acquarone. Historia de la pintura en la Argentina. Buenos Aires. Galería de las Artes Bookstore, 1965.

Argentina en el mundo. Artes Visuales 1. Buenos Aires. Museum of Fine Arts Eduardo Sívori, December 15 – 31, 1965.

Magia e imaginación en la pintura. Buenos Aires. Dédalo Art Gallery, June 1965.

Exposición Homenaje a J. Batlle Planas. Buenos Aires, Proar. Art Gallery, May 4 – 27, 1965.

De Carlos Pellegrini a nuestros días. Homenaje al Sesquicentenario de la Independencia Argentina. Buenos Aires, Argentine Hebraic Society, July 14 – 30, 1966.

Surrealismo en la Argentina. Buenos Aires. Torcuato Di Tella Institute's Center for Visual Arts, June 9 – 28, 1967.

Pintura Argentina. Primeras manifestaciones de vanguardia (1920-30). Buenos Aires, Argentine Hebraic Society, June 2 – 31, 1976.

Panorama de la pintura argentina 1. Buenos Aires, Lorenzutti Foundation, National Exhibition Rooms, April 15 – 30, 1969.

Pintura Argenitna. Promoción Internacional/ Argentine Painting. International Promotion. Buenos Aires, Lorenzutti Foundation, National Museum of Fine Arts, July 15 – 30, 1970.

SADE Sociedad Argentina de Escritores. Subasta de obras Pro-Edificio del Escritor. Buenos Aires, Bonino Gallery, 1971.

Mediator Dei. IX Salón de Arte Sagrado. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, November, 1971.

Obras maestros de la pintura argentina 1. Buenos Aires, Lorenzutti Foundation, National Exhibition Rooms, July 5 – 21, 1972.

Obras de arte argentino pequeño formato (tout petit). Buenos Aires. Centoira Art Gallery, 1974.

1974 Centenario de Mar del Plata. Muestra Homenaje de los Plásticos Argentinos. Mar del Plata, Lorenzutti Foundation. Exhibition Room, February 1 through March 10, 1974.

A 45 años del Nuevo Salón de Amigos del Arte. Buenos Aires. Vermeer Art Gallery, August, 1974.

Maestros de la pintura argentina (De Prilidiano Pueyrredón a Emilio Pettoruti). Buenos Aires. University of Buenos Aires, Direction of Culture. Provincial Museum of Fine Arts, La Plata, November 19 – 30, 1975.

Más allá de la pintura. Buenos Aires. Martina Céspedes, April, 1975.

Pintores Argentinos en Rubbers. "Adhesión al Mundial 78". Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, June 7 – 24, 1978.

Los raros. Buenos Aires. Vermeer Gallery, 1982.

El símbolo de la cruz en el arte argentino. Buenos Aires. Arché Foundation, 1982.

Funi Asociación para el Futuro del niño. Buenos Aires, Rubbers Gallery, September 22 through October 1, 1983.

El Anti-Rinoceronte. Periódico Martín Fierro. Las primeras vanguardias. Buenos Aires, Ruth Benzacar Gallery, October – November 1983.

Funi Asociación para el Futuro del niño. Buenos Aires, Van Riel Gallery, August 14 – 31, 1984.

Inauguración de la Galería Sur. Punta del Este. Sur Gallery, 1985.

Art of The Fantastic Latin America 1920-1987. Indianapolis. Museum of Art, June-September 1987. (Traveling exhibition: New York, The Queens Museum; Miami. Center for the Fine Arts).

Cultura de lo surreal. Buenos Aires, CAyC, 1988.

Art in Latin America. The Modern Era 1920-1980. London. The Hayward Gallery, May-August 1989. (Traveling exhibition: Stockholm, National Museum and Museum of Modern Art, 1889; Madrid. Velázquez Palace, 1989 – 1990).

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